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IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

VOLUME XI

THE DIARY OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN AND OTHER STORIES

FLETCHER C. RANSOM

THE NOVELS AND STORIES OF
IVÁN TURGÉNIEFF

THE DIARY OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN AND OTHER STORIES

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN BY
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PREFACE

"In 'The Diary of a Superfluous Man,'" says one well-known Russian critic, "we have to deal with the end of the pathological process upon the body of Russian society. In Turgénieff's productions which followed it we have to deal with a crisis in Russian life, with the growth of a new order of things. Apart from the fundamental profundity of its tendency, the 'Diary' is extremely noteworthy for its artistic workmanship. In spite of a certain monotony of tone in its exposition, it produces a very strong impression by its abundance of poetical beauties, which are perfectly suited to the melancholy mood of the whole story. . . In creating his 'Superfluous Man' the author, evidently, aimed at making as powerful an impression as possible, and therefore employed the most brilliant pigments in depicting Tchulkatúrin. He attained his object. Russian society started back in horror at this portrait of itself, which was somewhat distorted yet a good likeness, and in its strong excitement vigorously repelled all community with the sickly figure of Tchulkatúrin. This horror showed that the time was ripe in Russian society for a different order of things,

that it was tired of inertness and was seeking a wider field of activity in which it might freely develop its real forces."

Another critic, comparing the "Diary" with "Hamlet of Shshtchígry County," says that what the latter expressed with a convulsive laugh Tchulkatúrin gave vent to in sickly, complaining shrieks, both productions being a bitter confession of moral impotence, of mental insolvency. "There is one passage in the 'Diary,'" he says, "which—especially if one comes upon it after perusing all that precedes it—it is impossible to read without a strong nervous shock, if not without tears—a passage which always has the same identical effect; and it contains the key to the comprehension of Turgénieff's relations toward Nature. It is the end of the 'Diary.' This passage is noteworthy. The predominant characteristic of Turgénieff's talent is here revealed in a particularly brilliant manner: a profound impregnation with Nature,—an impregnation which reached the point almost of fusion with it. The breath of spring blows upon the reader, there is a scent of the upturned soil,—and nowhere else, possibly save in that chapter of Tolstóy's 'Youth,' which describes the removal of the double windows, and the reader is suddenly enveloped in the keen, fresh air of spring, is there anything which can be compared with this passage."

Still another critic says: "The ironical analysis

of the moral feebleness of the Russian intellectual class, which constitutes the ruling motive of 'Hamlet of Shshtchígry County,' is converted into sickly complaint in 'The Diary of a Superfluous Man,' one of the most original and best-sustained of Turgénieff's stories, and one which is most profoundly imbued with feeling.

"Turgénieff's story 'Three Portraits,'" said the most famous of Russian critics, Byelínsky, "possesses, in addition to the cleverness and vividness of its presentation, all the fascination, not of a novel, but rather of a reminiscence of the *good* old times. A fitting motto for it would be: 'Deeds of days gone by.'"

All the critics admit that the type of Vasíly Lutchínoff had existed, and one says: "I attribute special importance to Turgénieff's Vasíly Lutchínoff because, in this character, the old type of Don Juan, of Lovelace, and so forth, assumed our own Russian, original form for the first time." This type (equally rapacious with that presented by the hero of "The Bully," which was written about the same time) is supposed to have prevailed in the eighteenth century, especially in the epoch of Katherine II. Although Turgénieff never wrote historical novels, this story, in company with passages from others of his works, is regarded as coming, practically, under the head of historical records faithful to the epochs dealt with by the author.

"The story 'Three Meetings,'" says one critic, "belongs entirely in the category of 'art for art's sake.' There can be no question here of any guiding idea. To speak figuratively, it is a fragrant flower, whose perfume one inhales with delight, but which presents no other essential qualities. Its whole point lies in its workmanship, and in paraphrase it loses its entire charm."

"This story," writes another critic, "may serve, in our opinion, as a curious monument of the ineptness of narrations in the first person. Turgénieff, who is such a complete master of the form of personal narration, was bound to exhibit also the weak side of it in its entirety. This has strutted forth in his 'Three Meetings' with such pride, independence, and, in a measure, with so much coquetry, that it has swallowed up its subject-matter. There are several brilliant pages in the story, but its fantastic, showy matter seems to be directed solely to the end of illuminating the person of the narrator in the most advantageous manner."

In discussing "The Memoirs of a Sportsman," a leading critic of the present day says: . . . "Another peculiarity which immediately won for him [Turgénieff] fame and sympathy among the public, is his entirely new manner of depicting figures from peasant life. Before the advent of Turgénieff the populace, even in the hands of Púshkin, even in those of Gógol, appeared either

in the capacity of an operatic chorus, or in the quality of peasants of the ballet, or as an accessory, comic figure. Turgénieff was the first to look into the soul of the common people and demonstrate that that soul was exactly like the soul of the cultivated man, only with its own peculiar turn to conceptions and feelings. By thus bringing the peasant close to us, by exhibiting him in this form, as a being one with us in blood, with whom, therefore, one can sympathise instead of regarding him merely as a rare spectacle, Turgénieff deservedly earned the reputation of a champion of emancipation. . . . . Two other tales are closely allied to 'The Memoirs of a Sportsman,' although they do not form a part of that collection: 'Mumú' and 'The Inn.' . . . One of them, 'Mumú,' is, perhaps, the most eloquent denunciation of serfdom which ever proceeded from Turgénieff's pen. It is the only one of his productions in which the central figure of the pig-headed [1] landed-proprietress is delineated with vivid and unconcealed hatred. But in this case also, the chief merit of the story does not lie in this arraignment,—in which are probably reflected the author's childish reminiscences,[2]—but in its warm, compassionate sympathy for the lot

[1] The word used is, literally, "self-fool." It was invented by Ostróvsky, in one of his most famous comedies.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] Some authorities assert positively that the incident narrated occurred in the Turgénieff household, and that Gerásim's mistress was the author's own mother.—TRANSLATOR.

of the poor dumb man, whose whole life was concentrated in love for a creature equally ill-treated by Fate—for the little dog he had reared. In 'The Inn,' also, serfdom is set forth in an extreme and hateful light. But here again the chief gist of the author's idea does not lie in that direction. . . . . It is evident that here Turgénieff has touched on the theme to which Dostoiévsky was so fond of reverting. That theme is—the accidental sin of a good and honest man, the crime of a pure mind atoned for by voluntary renunciation, and the reconciling power of repentance, humility and prayer. Evil remains unpunished in Turgénieff's story. . . . . And yet the story produces a shattering moral effect, thanks to the humble grandeur of Akím's figure, and its combination of meekness and criminality. Mean as Naúm is in his triumph, repulsive as is landed-proprietress Elizavéta Prókhorovna with her cowardly and hypocritical greed, the story leaves on the reader a soothing impression."

I. F. H.

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THE DIARY OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN

(1850)

THE DIARY OF A SUPERFLUOUS MAN

HAMLET OF OVÉTCHI-VÓDY,[1]
March 20, 18 .

THE doctor has just left me. At last I have obtained a categorical answer! Dodge as he might, he could not help saying what he thought, at last. Yes, I shall die soon, very soon. The streams are opening, and I shall float away, probably with the last snows . . . . whither? God knows! To the sea also. Well, all right! If I must die, then 't is better to die in the spring. But is it not ridiculous to begin one's diary perhaps a fortnight before one's death? Where 's the harm? And in what way are fourteen days less than fourteen years, fourteen centuries? In the presence of eternity, they say, everything is of no account—yes; but, in that case, eternity also is of no account. I am falling into speculation, I think: that is a bad sign—am not I beginning to turn coward?—It will be better if I narrate something. It is raw and windy out of doors,—I am forbidden to go out. But what shall I narrate? A well-bred man does not talk

[1] Sheep's-Waters or Springs.—TRANSLATOR.

about his maladies; composing a novel, or something of that sort, is not in my line; reflections about exalted themes are beyond my powers; descriptions of life round about me do not even interest me; and to do nothing is tiresome; to read—is idleness. Eh! I will narrate to myself the story of my own life. A capital idea! When death is approaching it is proper, and can offend no one. I begin.

I was born thirty years ago, the son of a fairly wealthy landed proprietor. My father was a passionate gambler; my mother was a lady with character . . . . a very virtuous lady. Only, I have never known a woman whose virtue afforded less satisfaction. She succumbed under the burden of her merits, and tortured everybody, beginning with herself. During the whole fifty years of her life, she never once rested, never folded her hands; she was eternally bustling and fussing about, like an ant—and without any result whatever, which cannot be said of the ant. An implacable worm gnawed her day and night. Only once did I behold her perfectly quiet,—namely, on the first day after her death, in her coffin. As I gazed at her, it really seemed to me that her face expressed mild surprise; the half-open lips, the sunken cheeks, and the gently-motionless eyes seemed to breathe forth the words: "How good it is not to stir!" Yes, 't is good, 't is good to part at last from the fatiguing con-

sciousness of life, from the importunate and uneasy sense of existence! But that is not the point.

I grew up badly, and not cheerfully. Both my father and my mother loved me; but that did not make things any the easier for me. My father had no power whatever in his own house, and no importance, in his quality of a man given over to a shameful and ruinous vice. He admitted his fall, and, without having the strength to renounce his favourite passion, he endeavoured, at least, by his constantly affectionate and discreet mien, by his submissive humility, to win the indulgence of his exemplary wife. My mamma, in fact, bore her misfortune with that magnificent and ostentatious long-suffering of virtue which contains so much of self-satisfied pride. She never reproached my father for anything, she silently surrendered to him her last penny, and paid his debts; he lauded her to her face and behind her back, but was not fond of staying at home, and petted me on the sly, as though he were himself afraid of contaminating me by his presence. But his ruffled features exhaled such kindness at those times, the feverish smirk on his lips was replaced by such a touching smile, his brown eyes, surrounded by fine wrinkles, beamed with so much love, that I involuntarily pressed my cheek to his cheek, moist and warm with tears. I wiped away those tears

with my handkerchief, and they flowed again, without effort, like the water in an overfilled glass. I set to crying myself, and he soothed me, patted my back with his hand, kissed me all over my face with his quivering lips. Even now, more than twenty years after his death, when I recall my poor father, dumb sobs rise in my throat, and my heart beats—beats as hotly and bitterly, it languishes with as much sorrowful compassion, as though it still had a long time to beat and as though there were anything to feel compassion about!

My mother, on the contrary, always treated me in one way, affectionately, but coldly. Such mothers, moral and just, are frequently to be met with in children's books. She loved me, but I did not love her. Yes! I shunned my virtuous mother, and passionately loved my vicious father.

But enough for to-day. I have made a beginning, and there is no cause for me to feel anxious about the end, whatever it may be. My malady will attend to that.

March 21.

The weather is wonderful to-day. It is warm and bright; the sun is playing gaily on the slushy snow; everything is glittering, smoking, dripping; the sparrows are screaming like mad creatures around the dark, sweating hedges; the damp air irritates my chest sweetly but fright-

fully. The spring, the spring is coming! I am sitting by the window, and looking out across the little river to the fields. O Nature! Nature! I love thee so, but I came forth from thy womb unfitted even for life. Yonder is a male sparrow hopping about with outspread wings; he is screaming—and every sound of his voice, every ruffled feather on his tiny body breathes forth health and strength.

What is to be concluded from that? Nothing. He is healthy and has a right to scream and ruffle up his feathers; but I am ill and must die—that is all. It is not worth while to say any more about that. And tearful appeals to nature are comically absurd. Let us return to my story.

I grew up, as I have already said, badly and not cheerfully. I had no brothers or sisters. I was educated at home. And, indeed, what would my mother have had to occupy her if I had been sent off to boarding-school or to a government institute? That 's what children are for—to keep their parents from being bored. We lived chiefly in the country, and sometimes went to Moscow. I had governors and teachers, as is the custom. A cadaverous and tearful German, Riechmann, has remained particularly memorable to me,—a remarkably melancholy being, crippled by fate, who was fruitlessly consumed by an anguished longing for his native land. My man-nurse, Vasíly, nicknamed "The Goose," would

sit, unshaved, in his everlasting old coat of blue frieze, beside the stove in the frightfully stifling atmosphere of the close anteroom, impregnated through and through with the sour odour of old kvas,—would sit and play cards with the coachman, Potáp, who had just got a new sheepskin coat, white as snow, and invincible tarred boots,—while Riechmann would be singing on the other side of the partition:

"Herz, mein Herz, warum so traurig?
Was bekümmert dich so sehr?
'S ist ja schön im fremden Lande—
Herz, mein Herz, was willst du mehr?"

After my father's death, we definitively removed to Moscow. I was then twelve years of age. My father died during the night of a stroke of apoplexy. I shall never forget that night. I was sleeping soundly, as all children are in the habit of sleeping; but I remember, that even athwart my slumber I thought I heard a heavy, laboured breathing. Suddenly I felt some one seize me by the shoulder and shake me. I open my eyes: in front of me stands my man-nurse. —"What 's the matter?"—"Come along, come along, Alexyéi Mikhaílitch is dying. . . ." I fly out of the bed like a mad creature, and into the bedroom. I look: my father is lying with his head thrown back, all red in the face, and rattling in his throat most painfully. The servants,

with frightened faces, throng the doors; in the anteroom some one inquires in a hoarse voice: "Has the doctor been sent for?" In the courtyard, a horse is being led out of the stable, the gate is creaking, a tallow candle is burning in the room on the floor; mamma is there also, overwhelmed, but without losing either her decorum or the consciousness of her own dignity. I flung myself on my father's breast, embraced him, and stammered out: "Papa, papa!" . . . He lay motionless and puckered up his eyes in a strange sort of way. I looked him in the face—unbearable horror stopped my breath; I squeaked with terror, like a roughly-grasped bird. They dragged me from him and carried me away. Only the night before, as though with a foreboding of his approaching death, he had caressed me so fervently and so sadly.

They brought a dishevelled and sleepy doctor, with a strong smell of lovage vodka. My father died under his lancet, and on the following day, thoroughly stupefied with grief, I stood with a candle in my hand in front of the table on which lay the corpse, and listened unheeding to the thick-voiced intoning of the chanter, occasionally broken by the feeble voice of the priest; tears kept streaming down my cheeks, over my lips, and my collar and my cuffs; I was consumed with tears, I stared fixedly at the motionless face of my father, as though I were expecting him to

do something; and my mother, meanwhile, slowly made reverences to the floor, slowly raised herself and, as she crossed herself, pressed her fingers strongly to her brow, her shoulders, and her body. There was not a single thought in my head; I had grown heavy all over, but I felt that something dreadful was taking place with me. . . . . It was then that Death looked into my face, and made a note of me.

We removed our residence to Moscow, after the death of my father, for a very simple reason: all our estate was sold under the hammer for debt, —positively everything, with the exception of one wretched little hamlet, the very one in which I am now finishing my magnificent existence. I confess that, in spite of the fact that I was young at the time, I grieved over the sale of our nest; that is to say, in reality, I grieved over our park only. With that park are bound up my sole bright memories. There, on one tranquil spring evening, I buried my best friend, an old dog with a bob tail and crooked paws—Trixie; there, hiding myself in the tall grass, I used to eat stolen apples, red, sweet Nóvgorod apples; there, in conclusion, I for the first time beheld through the bushes of ripe raspberries, Klaudia the maid, who, despite her snub nose, and her habit of laughing in her kerchief, aroused in me such a tender passion that in her presence I hardly breathed, felt like swooning, and was stricken

dumb. But one day, on the Bright Sunday,[1] when her turn came to kiss my lordly hand, I all but flung myself down and kissed her patched goatskin shoes. Great heavens! Can it be twenty years since all that happened? It does not seem so very long since I used to ride my shaggy, chestnut horse along the old wattled hedge of our park, and, rising in my stirrups, pluck the double-faced leaves of the poplars. While a man is living he is not conscious of his own life; like a sound, it becomes intelligible to him a little while afterward.

Oh, my park! Oh, my overgrown paths along the little pond! Oh, unhappy little spot beneath the decrepit dam, where I used to catch minnows and gudgeons! And you, ye lofty birch-trees, with long, pendulous branches, from behind which, from the country road, the melancholy song of the peasant used to be wafted, unevenly broken by the jolts of the rough cart—I send you my last farewells! . . . As I part with life I stretch out my hands to you alone. I should like once more to inhale the bitter freshness of the wormwood, the sweet scent of the reaped buckwheat in the fields of my natal spot; I should like once more to hear from afar the modest jangling of the cracked bell on our parish church; once more to lie in the cool shadow beneath the oak-bush on the slope of the famil-

[1] Easter.—Translator.

iar ravine; once more to follow with my eyes the moving trace of the wind, as it flew like a dark streak over the golden grass of our meadow. . . .

Ekh, to what end is all this? But I cannot go on to-day. Until to-morrow.

March 22.

To-day it is cold and overcast again. Such weather is far more suitable. It is in accord with my work. Yesterday quite unseasonably evoked in me a multitude of unnecessary feelings and memories. That will not be repeated. Emotional effusions are like liquorice-root: when you take your first suck at it, it does n't seem bad, but it leaves a very bad taste in your mouth afterward. I will simply and quietly narrate the story of my life.

So then, we went to live in Moscow. . . .

But it just occurs to me: is it really worth while to tell the story of my life?

No, decidedly it is not worth while. . . . My life is in no way different from the lives of a mass of other people. The parental home, the university, service in inferior positions, retirement, a small circle of acquaintances, downright poverty, modest pleasures, humble occupations, moderate desires—tell me, for mercy's sake, who does not know all that? And I, in particular, shall not tell the story of my life, be-

cause I am writing for my own pleasure; and if my past presents even to me nothing very cheerful, nor even very sorrowful, that means that there really can be nothing in it worthy of attention. I had better try to analyse my own character to myself.

What sort of a man am I? . . . Some one may remark to me that no one asks about that.—Agreed. But, you see, I am dying,—God is my witness, I am dying,—and really before death the desire to know what sort of a fellow I have been is pardonable, I think.

After having thoroughly pondered this important question, and having, moreover, no need to express myself bitterly on my own score, as do people who are strongly convinced of their merits, I must confess one thing: I have been an utterly superfluous man in this world, or, if you like to put it that way, an utterly useless bird. And I intend to prove that to-morrow, because to-day I am coughing like an aged sheep, and my nurse, Teréntievna, will give me no peace. "Lie down, dear little father mine," she says, "and drink your tea." . . . I know why she worries me: she wants some tea herself! Well! All right! Why not permit the poor old woman to extract, at the finish, all possible profit from her master? . . . The time for that has not yet gone by.

March 23.

Winter again. The snow is falling in large flakes.

Superfluous, superfluous. . . . That 's a capital word I have devised. The more deeply I penetrate into myself, the more attentively I scrutinise the whole of my own past life, the more convinced do I become of the strict justice of that expression. Superfluous—precisely that. That word is not appropriate to other people. . . . People are bad, good, clever, stupid, agreeable, and disagreeable; but superfluous . . . . no. That is to say, understand me: the universe could dispense with these people also . . . . of course; but uselessness is not their chief quality, is not their distinguishing characteristic, and when you are speaking of them, the word " superfluous " is not the first one that comes to your tongue. But I . . . . of me nothing else could possibly be said: superfluous—that is all. Nature had not, evidently, calculated on my appearance, and in consequence of this, she treated me like an unexpected and unbidden guest. Not without cause did one wag, a great lover of Swedish whist, say of me, that my mother had discarded.[1] I speak of myself now calmly, without any gall. . . . . 'T is a thing of the past! During the whole course of my life I have constantly found

[1] A decidedly vulgar pun in the original.—Translator.

my place occupied, possibly because I sought my place in the wrong direction. I was suspicious, bashful, irritable, like all invalids; moreover, probably owing to superfluous vanity,—or by reason of the deficient organisation of my person,—between my feelings and my thoughts and the expression of those feelings and thoughts there existed some senseless, incomprehensible and insuperable barrier; and when I made up my mind to overcome that impediment by force, to break down that barrier, my movements, the expression of my face, my entire being assumed the aspect of anguished tension: I not only seemed, but I actually became unnatural and affected. I was conscious of it myself and made haste to retire again into myself. Then a frightful tumult arose within me. I analysed myself to the last shred; I compared myself with other people; I recalled the smallest glances, the smiles, the words of the people before whom I would have liked to expand; I interpreted everything from its bad side, and laughed maliciously over my pretensions " to be like the rest of the world," —and suddenly, in the midst of my laughter, I sadly relaxed utterly, fell into foolish dejection, and then began the same thing all over again; in a word, I ran round like a squirrel in a wheel. Whole days passed in this torturing, fruitless toil. Come now, tell me, pray, to whom and for what is such a man of use? Why did

this happen with me, what was the cause of this minute fidgeting over myself—who knows? Who can say?

I remember, one day I was driving out of Moscow in the diligence. The road was good, but the postilion had hitched an extra trace-horse to the four-span. This unhappy, fifth, wholly unnecessary horse, fastened in rough fashion to the fore-end of a thick, short rope, which ruthlessly saws its haunches, rubs its tail, makes it run in the most unnatural manner, and imparts to its whole body the shape of a comma, always arouses my profound compassion. I remarked to the postilion that, apparently, the fifth horse might be dispensed with on that occasion. . . . . He remained silent awhile, shook the back of his neck, lashed the horse half a score of times in succession with his whip across its gaunt back and under its puffed-out belly—and said, not without a grin: " Well, you see, it has stuck itself on, that 's a fact! What the devil 's the use? "

And I, also, have stuck myself on. . . But the station is not far off, I think.

Superfluous. . . . I promised to prove the justice of my opinion, and I will fulfil my promise. I do not consider it necessary to mention a thousand details, daily occurrences and incidents, which, moreover, in the eyes of every thoughtful man might serve as incontrovertible proofs in my favour—that is to say, in favour

of my view; it is better for me to begin directly with one decidedly important event, after which, probably, no doubt will remain as to the accuracy of the word superfluous. I repeat: I have no intention of entering into details, but I cannot pass over in silence one decidedly curious and noteworthy circumstance,—namely, the strange manner in which my friends treated me (I also had friends) every time I chanced to meet them, or even dropped in to see them. They seemed to grow uneasy; as they came to meet me they either smiled in a not entirely natural manner, looked not at my eyes, not at my feet, as some people do, but chiefly at my cheeks, hastily ejaculated: "Ah! how do you do, Tchulkatúrin!" (Fate had favoured me with that name[1]) or, "Ah! so here 's Tchulkatúrin!" immediately stepped aside, went apart, and even remained for some time thereafter motionless, as though they were trying to recall something. I noticed all this, because I am not deficient in penetration and the gift of observation; on the whole, I am not stupid; decidedly amusing thoughts sometimes come into my head even, not at all ordinary thoughts; but, as I am a superfluous man with a dumbness inside me, I dread to express my thought, the more so, as I know beforehand that I shall express it very badly. It even seems strange to me, sometimes, that people can talk,

[1] Derived from *tchulók*, stocking.—Translator.

and so simply, so freely. . . . "What a calamity!!" you think. I am bound to say that my tongue pretty often itched, in spite of my dumbness; and I actually did utter words in my youth, but in riper years I succeeded in restraining myself almost every time. I would say to myself in an undertone: "See here, now, 't will be better for me to hold my tongue awhile," and I quieted down. We are all experts at holding our tongues; our women in particular have that capacity: one exalted young Russian lady maintains silence so vigorously that such a spectacle is capable of producing a slight shiver and cold perspiration even in a man who has been forewarned. But that is not the point, and it is not for me to criticise other people. I will proceed to the promised story.

Several years ago, thanks to a concurrence of trivial but, for me, very important circumstances, I chanced to pass six months in the county town of O***. This town is built entirely on a declivity. It has about eight hundred inhabitants, remarkably poor; the wretched little houses are outrageously bad; in the main street, under the guise of a pavement, formidable slabs of unhewn limestone crop out whitely here and there, in consequence of which, even the peasant-carts drive around it; in the very centre of an astonishingly untidy square rises a tiny yellowish structure with dark holes, and in the holes sit men in

large caps with visors, and pretend to be engaged in trade; there, also, rears itself aloft a remarkably tall, striped pole, and beside the pole, by way of order, at the command of the authorities, a load of yellow hay is kept, and one governmental hen stalks about. In a word, in the town of O*** existence is excellent.

During the early days of my sojourn in that town I nearly went out of my mind with ennui. I must say of myself that, although I am a superfluous man, of course, yet it is not of my own will; I am sickly myself, but I cannot endure anything sickly. . . . I would have no objections to happiness, I have even tried to approach it from the right and from the left. . . . And, therefore, it is not surprising that I can also feel bored, like any other mortal. I found myself in the town of O*** on business connected with the Government service. . . .

Teréntievna is absolutely determined to kill me. Here is a specimen of our conversation:

Teréntievna. O-okh, dear little father! why do you keep writing? It is n't healthy for you to write.

I. But I 'm bored, Teréntievna.

She. But do drink some tea and lie down.

I. But I don't feel sleepy.

She. Akh, dear little father! Why do you say that? The Lord be with you! Lie down now, lie down: it 's better for you.

I. I shall die anyway, Teréntievna.

She. The Lord forbid and have mercy! . . . Well, now, do you order me to make tea?

I. I shall not survive this week, Teréntievna.

She. Ii-i, dear little father! Why do you say that? . . . So I 'll go and prepare the samovár.

Oh, decrepit, yellow, toothless creature! Is it possible that to you I am not a man!

March 24. A hard frost.

On the very day of my arrival in the town of O***, the above-mentioned governmental business caused me to call on a certain Ozhógin, Kiríll Matvyéevitch, one of the chief officials of the county; but I made acquaintance with him, or, as the saying is, got intimate with him, two weeks later. His house was situated on the principal street, and was distinguished from all the rest by its size, its painted roof, and two lions on the gate, belonging to that race of lions which bear a remarkable likeness to the unsuccessful dogs whose birthplace is Moscow. It is possible to deduce from these lions alone that Ozhógin was an opulent man. And, in fact, he owned four hundred souls of serfs;[1] he received at his house the best society of the town of O***, and bore the reputation of being a hospitable man. The

[1] Meaning male serfs. The women and children were not reckoned.—Translator.

chief of police came to him, in a broad carroty-hued drozhky drawn by a pair of horses—a remarkably large man, who seemed to have been carved out of shop-worn material. Other officials visited him also: the pettifogger, a yellowish and rather malicious creature; the waggish surveyor, of German extraction, with a Tatár face; the officer of Ways of Communication, a tender soul, a singer, but a scandal-monger; a former county Marshal of Nobility, a gentleman with dyed hair, and rumpled cuffs, trousers with straps, and that extremely noble expression of countenance which is so characteristic of people who have been under trial by the courts. He was visited also by two landed proprietors, inseparable friends, both no longer young, and even threadbare with age, the younger of whom was constantly squelching the elder, and shutting his mouth with one and the same reproach: "Come, that will do, Sergyéi Sergyéitch! What do you know about it? For you write the word *próbka* [cork] with the letter *b*. . . . Yes, gentlemen," —he was wont to continue, with all the heat of conviction, addressing those present:—"Sergyéi Sergyéitch writes not *próbka,* but *bróbka.*" And all present laughed, although, probably, not one of them was particularly distinguished for his skill in orthography; and the unhappy Sergyéi Sergyéitch held his peace, and bowed his head with a pacific smile. But I am forgetting that my days are numbered, and am entering

into too great detail. So then, without further circumlocution: Ozhógin was married and had a daughter, Elizavéta Kiríllovna, and I fell in love with that daughter.

Ozhógin himself was a commonplace man, neither good nor bad; his wife was beginning to look a good deal like an aged hen; but their daughter did not take after her parents. She was very comely, of vivacious and gentle disposition. Her bright grey eyes gazed good-naturedly, and in a straightforward manner from beneath childishly-arched brows; she smiled almost constantly, and laughed also quite frequently. Her fresh voice had a very pleasant ring; she moved easily, swiftly, and blushed gaily. She did not dress very elegantly; extremely simple gowns suited her best.

As a rule, I have never made acquaintance quickly, and if I have felt at ease with a person on first meeting,—which, however, has almost never been the case,—I confess that that has spoken strongly in favour of the new acquaintance. I have not known how to behave to women at all, and in their presence I either frowned and assumed a fierce expression, or displayed my teeth in a grin in the stupidest way, and twisted my tongue about in my mouth with embarrassment. With Elizavéta Kiríllovna, on the contrary, I felt myself at home from the very first moment. This is how it came about. One

day I arrive at Ozhógin's before dinner, and ask: "Is he at home?" I am told: "Yes, and he is dressing; please come into the hall."[1] I go into the hall; I see a young girl in a white gown standing by the window, with her back toward me, and holding a cage in her hands. I curl up a little, according to my habit; but, nevertheless, I cough out of propriety. The young girl turns round quickly, so quickly that her curls strike her in the face, catches sight of me, bows, and with a smile shows me a little box, half-filled with seed.

"Will you excuse me?"

Of course, as is customary in such circumstances, I first bent my head, and, at the same time, crooked and straightened my knees (as though some one had hit me from behind in the back of my legs, which, as everybody knows, serves as a token of excellent breeding and agreeable ease of manner), and then smiled, raised my hand, and waved it twice cautiously and gently in the air. The girl immediately turned away from me, took from the cage a small board, and began to scrape it violently with a knife, and suddenly, without changing her attitude, gave utterance to the following words:

"This is papa's bull-finch. . . . Do you like bull-finches?"

[1] The large music-room, also used for dancing, as a play-room for the children in winter, and so forth, in Russian houses.—Translator.

"I prefer canary-birds,"—I replied, not without a certain effort.

"And I am fond of canary-birds also; but just look at him, see how pretty he is. See, he is not afraid."—What surprised me was that I was not afraid.—"Come closer. His name is Pópka."

I went up, and bent over.

"He 's very charming, is n't he?"

She turned her face toward me; but we were standing so close to each other that she was obliged to throw her head back a little, in order to look at me with her bright eyes. I gazed at her: the whole of her rosy young face was smiling in so friendly a manner that I smiled also, and almost laughed aloud with pleasure. The door opened; Mr. Ozhógin entered. I immediately went to him, and began to talk with him in a very unembarrassed way; I do not know myself how I came to stay to dinner; I sat out the whole evening, and on the following day, Ozhógin's lackey, a long, purblind fellow, was already smiling at me, as a friend of the house, as he pulled off my overcoat.

To find a refuge, to weave for myself even a temporary nest, to know the joy of daily relations and habits,—that was a happiness which I, a superfluous man, without domestic memories, had not experienced up to that time. If there were anything about me suggestive of a flower, and if that comparison were not so threadbare, I

would decide to say that, from that hour, I began to blossom out in spirit. Everything in me and round about me underwent such an instantaneous change! My whole life was illuminated by love, —literally my whole life, down to the smallest details,—like a dark, deserted chamber into which a candle has been brought. I lay down to sleep and I rose up, dressed myself, breakfasted, and smoked my pipe in a way different from my habit; I even skipped as I walked,—really I did, as though wings had suddenly sprouted on my shoulders. I remember that I was not in doubt even for a minute, as to the feeling with which Elizavéta Kiríllovna had inspired me; and from the very first day, I fell in love with her passionately, and from the very first day, too, I knew that I was in love. I saw her every day for the space of three weeks. Those three weeks were the happiest time of my life; but the remembrance of them is painful to me. I cannot think of them alone: that which followed them involuntarily rises up before me, and venomous grief slowly grips the heart which had just grown soft.

When a man is feeling very well, his brain, as every one knows, acts very little. A calm and joyous feeling, a feeling of satisfaction, permeates his whole being; he is swallowed up in it; the consciousness of individuality vanishes in him—he is in a state of bliss, as badly educated poets say. But when, at last, that " spell " passes

off, a man sometimes feels vexed and regretful that, in the midst of happiness, he was so unobservant of himself that he did not redouble his thoughts, his reflections, and his memories, that he did not prolong his enjoyment . . . . as though a "blissful" man had any time, and as though it were worth while to reflect about his own emotions! The happy man is like a fly in the sunshine. That is why, when I recall those three weeks, I find it almost impossible to retain in my mind an accurate, definite impression, the more so, as in the whole course of that time, nothing of particular note took place between us. . . . . Those twenty days present themselves to me as something warm, young, and fragrant, as a sort of bright streak in my dim and grey-hued life. My memory suddenly becomes implacably faithful and clear, only dating from the moment when the blows of Fate descended upon me, speaking again in the words of those same ill-bred writers.

Yes, those three weeks. . . . However, they did not precisely leave no images behind in me. Sometimes, when I happen to think long of that time, certain memories suddenly float forth from the gloom of the past—as the stars unexpectedly start forth in the evening sky to meet attentively-riveted eyes. Especially memorable to me is one stroll in a grove outside the town. There were four of us: old Madame Ozhógin, Liza, I,

and a certain Bizmyónkoff, a petty official of the town of O***, a fair-haired, good-natured, and meek young man. I shall have occasion to allude to him again. Mr. Ozhógin remained at home: his head ached, in consequence of his having slept too long. The day was splendid, warm, and calm. I must remark that gardens of entertainment and public amusement are not to the taste of the Russian. In governmental towns, in the so-called Public Gardens, you will never encounter a living soul at any season of the year; possibly some old woman will seat herself, grunting, on a green bench baked through and through by the sun, in the neighbourhood of a sickly tree, and that only when there is no dirty little shop close to the gate. But if there is a sparse little birch-grove in the vicinity of the town, the merchants, and sometimes the officials, will gladly go thither on Sundays and feast-days, with their samovár, patties, water-melons, and set out all those good gifts on the dusty grass, right by the side of the road, seat themselves around, and eat and drink tea in the sweat of their brows until the very evening. Precisely that sort of small grove existed then two versts distant from the town of O***. We went thither after dinner, drank tea in due form, and then all four of us set off for a stroll through the grove. Bizmyónkoff gave his arm to old Madame Ozhógin; I gave mine to Liza. The day was already inclining

toward evening. I was then in the very ardour of first love (not more than a fortnight had elapsed since we had become acquainted), in that condition of passionate and attentive adoration, when your whole soul innocently and involuntarily follows every motion of the beloved being; when you cannot satiate yourself with its presence, or hear enough of its voice; when you smile and look like a convalescent child, and any man of a little experience must see at the first glance, a hundred paces off, what is going on in you.

Up to that day, I had not once chanced to be arm in arm with Liza. I walked by her side, treading softly on the green grass. A light breeze seemed to be fluttering around us, between the white boles of the birch-trees, now and then blowing the ribbon of her hat in my face. With an importunate gaze I watched her, until, at last, she turned gaily to me, and we smiled at each other. The birds chirped approvingly overhead, the blue sky peered caressingly through the fine foliage. My head reeled with excess of pleasure. I hasten to remark that Liza was not in the least in love with me. She liked me; in general, she was not shy of any one, but I was not fated to disturb her childish tranquillity. She walked arm in arm with me, as with a brother. She was seventeen years old at the time. . . . And yet, that same evening, in my presence, there began in her that quiet, inward fermentation, which

precedes the conversion of a child into a woman. . . . . I was witness to that change of the whole being, that innocent perplexity, that tremulous pensiveness; I was the first to note that sudden softness of glance, that ringing uncertainty of voice—and, oh, stupid fool! oh, superfluous man! for a whole week I was not ashamed to assume that I, I was the cause of that change!

This is the way it happened.

We strolled for quite a long time, until evening, and chatted very little. I held my peace, like all inexperienced lovers, and she, in all probability, had nothing to say to me; but she seemed to be meditating about something, and shook her head in a queer sort of way, pensively nibbling at a leaf which she had plucked. Sometimes she began to stride forward in such a decided way . . . and then suddenly halted, waited for me and gazed about her with eyebrows elevated and an absent-minded smile. On the preceding evening, we had read together "The Prisoner of the Caucasus." [1] With what eagerness had she listened to me, with her face propped on both hands, and her bosom resting against the table! I tried to talk about our reading of the evening before; she blushed, asked me whether I had given the bull-finch any hemp-seed before we started, began to sing loudly some song, then suddenly ceased. The grove ended on one side in a rather

[1] By M. Y. Lérmontoff.

steep and lofty cliff; below flowed a small, meandering river, and beyond it, further than the eye could see, stretched endless meadows, now swelling slightly like waves, now spreading out like a table-cloth, here and there intersected with ravines. Liza and I were the first to emerge on the edge of the grove; Bizmyónkoff remained behind with the old lady. We came out, halted, and both of us involuntarily narrowed our eyes: directly opposite us, in the midst of the red-hot mist, the sun was setting, huge and crimson. Half the sky was aglow and flaming; the red rays beat aslant across the meadows, casting a scarlet reflection even on the shady side of the ravine, and lay like fiery lead upon the river, where it was not hidden under overhanging bushes, and seemed to be reposing in the lap of the ravine and the grove. We stood there drenched in the blazing radiance. It is beyond my power to impart all the passionate solemnity of that picture. They say that the colour red appeared to one blind man like the sound of a trumpet; I do not know to what degree that comparison is just; but, actually, there was something challenging in that flaming gold of the evening air, in the crimson glow of sky and earth. I cried out with rapture, and immediately turned to Liza. She was gazing straight at the sun. I remember, the glare of the sunset was reflected in her eyes in tiny, flaming spots. She was startled, profoundly moved. She made no

answer to my exclamation, did not stir for a long time, and hung her head. . . . I stretched out my hand to her; she turned away from me, and suddenly burst into tears. I gazed at her with secret, almost joyful surprise. . . . Bizmyónkoff's voice rang out a couple of paces from us. Liza hastily wiped her eyes, and with a wavering smile looked at me. The old lady emerged from the grove, leaning on the arm of her fair-haired escort; both of them, in their turn, admired the view. The old lady asked Liza some question, and I remember that I involuntarily shivered when, in reply, her daughter's broken voice, like cracked glass, resounded in reply. In the meanwhile, the sun had set, the glow was beginning to die out. We retraced our steps. I again gave Liza my arm. It was still light in the grove, and I could clearly discern her features. She was embarrassed, and did not raise her eyes. The flush which had spread all over her face did not disappear; she seemed still to be standing in the rays of the setting sun. . . . Her arm barely touched mine. For a long time I could not start a conversation, so violently was my heart beating. We caught glimpses of the carriage far away, through the trees; the coachman was driving to meet us at a foot-pace over the friable sand of the road.

"Lizavéta Kiríllovna,"—I said at last,—"why did you weep?"

"I don't know,"—she answered after a brief

pause, looking at me with her gentle eyes, still wet with tears,—their glance seemed to me to have undergone a change,—and again fell silent.

"I see that you love nature . . . ." I went on.—That was not in the least what I had meant to say, and my tongue hardly stammered out the last phrase to the end. She shook her head. I could not utter a word more. . . . I was waiting for something . . . . not a confession—no, indeed! I was waiting for a confiding glance, a question. . . . But Liza stared at the ground and held her peace. I repeated once more, in an undertone: "Why?" and received no reply. She was embarrassed, almost ashamed, I saw that.

A quarter of an hour later, we were all seated in the carriage and driving toward the town. The horses advanced at a brisk trot; we dashed swiftly through the moist, darkening air. I suddenly began to talk, incessantly addressing myself now to Bizmyónkoff, now to Madame Ozhógin. I did not look at Liza, but I could not avoid perceiving that from the corner of the carriage her gaze never once rested on me. At home she recovered with a start, but would not read with me, and soon went off to bed. The break—that break of which I have spoken—had been effected in her. She had ceased to be a little girl; she was already beginning to expect . . . like myself . . . . something or other. She did not have to wait long.

But that night I returned to my lodgings in a state of utter enchantment. The confused something, which was not exactly a foreboding, nor yet exactly a suspicion, that had arisen within me vanished: I ascribed the sudden constraint in Liza's behaviour toward me to maidenly modesty, to timidity. . . . Had not I read a thousand times in many compositions, that the first appearance of love agitates and alarms a young girl? I felt myself very happy, and already began to construct various plans in my own mind. . . .

If any one had then whispered in my ear: "Thou liest, my dear fellow! that 's not in store for thee at all, my lad! thou art doomed to die alone in a miserable little house, to the intolerable grumbling of an old peasant-woman, who can hardly wait for thy death, in order that she may sell thy boots for a song. . . ."

Yes, one involuntarily says, with the Russian philosopher: "How is one to know what he does not know?"—Until to-morrow.

March 25. A white winter day.

I HAVE read over what I wrote yesterday, and came near tearing up the whole note-book. It seems to me that my style of narrative is too protracted and too mawkish. However, as my remaining memories of that period present nothing cheerful, save the joy of that peculiar

nature which Lérmontoff had in view when he said that it is a cheerful and a painful thing to touch the ulcers of ancient wounds, then why should not I observe myself? But I must not impose upon kindness. Therefore I will continue without mawkishness.

For the space of a whole week, after that stroll outside the town, my position did not improve in the least, although the change in Liza became more perceptible every day. As I have already stated, I interpreted this change in the most favourable possible light for myself. . . . The misfortune of solitary and timid men—those who are timid through self-love—consists precisely in this—that they, having eyes, and even keeping them staring wide open, see nothing, or see it in a false light, as though through coloured glasses. And their own thoughts and observations hinder them at every step.

In the beginning of our acquaintance Liza had treated me trustingly and frankly, like a child; perhaps, even, in her liking for me there was something of simple, childish affection. . . . But when that strange, almost sudden crisis took place in her, after a short perplexity, she felt herself embarrassed in my presence, she turned away from me involuntarily, and at the same time grew sad and pensive. . . . She was expecting . . . . what? She herself did not know . . . . but I . . . . I, as I have already said, rejoiced

at that crisis. . . . As God is my witness, I almost swooned with rapture, as the saying is. However, I am willing to admit that any one else in my place might have been deceived also. . . . Who is devoid of self-love? It is unnecessary to say that all this became clear to me only after a time, when I was compelled to fold my injured wings, which were not any too strong at best.

The misunderstanding which arose between Liza and me lasted for a whole week,—and there is nothing surprising about that: it has been my lot to be a witness of misunderstandings which have lasted for years and years. And who was it that said that only the true is real? A lie is as tenacious of life as is the truth, if not more so. It is a fact, I remember, that even during that week I had a pang now and then . . . . but a lonely man like myself, I will say once more, is as incapable of understanding what is going on within him as he is of comprehending what is going on before his eyes. Yes, and more than that: is love a natural feeling? Is it natural to a man to love? Love is a malady; and for a malady the law is not written. Suppose my heart did contract unpleasantly within me at times; but, then, everything in me was turned upside down. How is a man to know under such circumstances what is right and what is wrong, what is the cause, what is the significance of every separate sensation?

But, be that as it may, all these misunderstandings, forebodings, and hopes were resolved in the following manner.

One day,—it was in the morning, about eleven o'clock,—before I had contrived to set my foot in Mr. Ozhógin's anteroom, an unfamiliar, ringing voice resounded in the hall, the door flew open, and, accompanied by the master of the house, there appeared on the threshold a tall, stately man of five-and-twenty, who hastily threw on his military cloak, which was lying on the bench, took an affectionate leave of Kiríll Matvyéevitch, touched his cap negligently as he passed me—and vanished, clinking his spurs.

"Who is that?"—I asked Ozhógin.

"Prince N***,"—replied the latter, with a troubled face;—"he has been sent from Petersburg to receive the recruits. But where are those servants?"—he went on with vexation:—"there was no one to put on his cloak."

We entered the hall.

"Has he been here long?"—I inquired.

"They say he came yesterday evening. I offered him a room in my house, but he declined it. However, he seems to be a very nice young fellow."

"Did he stay long with you?"

"About an hour. He asked me to introduce him to Olympiáda Nikítichna."

"And did you introduce him?"

" Certainly."

" And did he make acquaintance with Lizavéta Kiríllovna? . . . ."

" Yes, he made her acquaintance, of course."

I said nothing for a while.

" Has he come to remain long, do you know? "

" Yes, I think he will be obliged to stay here more than a fortnight."

And Kiríll Matvyéevitch ran off to dress.

I paced up and down the hall several times. I do not remember that Prince N***'s arrival produced any special impression on me at the time, except that unpleasant sensation which usually takes possession of us at the appearance of a new face in our domestic circle. Perhaps that feeling was mingled with something in the nature of envy of the timid and obscure Moscow man for the brilliant officer from Petersburg.—" The Prince,"—I thought,—" is a dandy of the capital; he will look down on us." . . . I had not seen him for more than a minute, but I had managed to note that he was handsome, alert, and easy-mannered.

After pacing the hall for a while, I came to a halt, at last, in front of a mirror, pulled from my pocket a tiny comb, imparted to my hair a picturesque disorder and, as sometimes happens, suddenly became engrossed in the contemplation of my own visage. I remember that my attention was concentrated with particular solicitude on

my nose; the rather flabby and undefined outline of that feature was affording me no special gratification—when, all of a sudden, in the dark depths of the inclined glass, which reflected almost the entire room, the door opened, and the graceful figure of Liza made its appearance. I do not know why I did not stir and kept the same expression on my face. Liza craned her head forward, gazed attentively at me and, elevating her eyebrows, biting her lips, and holding her breath, like a person who is delighted that he has not been seen, cautiously retreated, and softly drew the door to after her. The door creaked faintly. Liza shuddered, and stood stock-still on the spot. . . . I did not move. . . . Again she pulled at the door-handle, and disappeared. There was no possibility of doubt: the expression of Liza's face at the sight of my person denoted nothing except a desire to beat a successful retreat, to avoid an unpleasant meeting; the swift gleam of pleasure which I succeeded in detecting in her eyes, when she thought that she really had succeeded in escaping unperceived,—all that said but too clearly: that young girl was not in love with me. For a long, long time I could not withdraw my gaze from the motionless, dumb door, which again presented itself as a white spot in the depths of the mirror; I tried to smile at my own upright figure—hung my head, returned home, and flung myself on the divan. I felt re-

markably heavy at heart, so heavy that I could not weep . . . . and what was there to weep about? . . . . "Can it be?"—I kept reiterating incessantly, as I lay, like a dead man, on my back, and with my hands folded on my breast:—"Can it be?" . . . . How do you like that "Can it be?"

March 26. A thaw.

When, on the following day, after long hesitation and inward quailing, I entered the familiar drawing-room of the Ozhógins', I was no longer the same man whom they had known for the space of three weeks. All my former habits, from which I had begun to wean myself under the influence of an emotion which was new to me, had suddenly made their appearance again, and taken entire possession of me like the owners returning to their house.

People like myself are generally guided not so much by positive facts, as by their own impressions; I, who, no longer ago than the previous evening, had been dreaming of "the raptures of mutual love," to-day cherished not the slightest doubt as to my own "unhappiness," and was in utter despair, although I myself was not able to discover any reasonable pretext for my despair. I could not be jealous of Prince N***, and whatever merits he might possess, his mere arrival was not sufficient instantly to extirpate

Liza's inclination for me. . . . But stay!—did that inclination exist? I recalled the past. "And the stroll in the forest?" I asked myself. "And the expression of her face in the mirror?"—"But," I went on,—"the stroll in the forest, apparently. . . . Phew, good heavens! What an insignificant being I am!" I exclaimed aloud, at last. This is a specimen of the half-expressed, half-thought ideas which, returning a thousand times, revolved in a monotonous whirlwind in my head. I repeat,—I returned to the Ozhógins' the same mistrustful, suspicious, constrained person that I had been from my childhood. . . .

I found the whole family in the drawing-room; Bizmyónkoff was sitting there also, in one corner. All appeared to be in high spirits: Ozhógin, in particular, was fairly beaming, and his first words were to communicate to me that Prince N*** had spent the whole of the preceding evening with them.—"Well," I said to myself, "now I understand why you are in such good humour." I must confess that the Prince's second call puzzled me. I had not expected that. Generally speaking, people like me expect everything in the world except that which ought to happen in the ordinary run of things. I sulked and assumed the aspect of a wounded, but magnanimous man; I wanted to punish Liza for her ungraciousness; from which, moreover, it must be concluded, that, nevertheless, I was not yet in

utter despair. They say, in some cases when you are really beloved, it is even advantageous to torture the adored object; but in my position, it was unutterably stupid. Liza, in the most innocent manner, paid no attention whatever to me. Only old Madame Ozhógin noticed my solemn taciturnity, and anxiously inquired after my health. Of course I answered her with a bitter smile that "I was perfectly well, thank God." Ozhógin continued to dilate on the subject of his visitor; but, observing that I answered him reluctantly, he addressed himself chiefly to Bizmyónkoff, who was listening to him with great attention, when a footman entered and announced Prince N***. The master of the house instantly sprang to his feet, and rushed forth to welcome him! Liza, on whom I immediately darted an eagle glance, blushed with pleasure, and fidgeted about on her chair. The Prince entered, perfumed, gay, amiable. . . .

As I am not composing a novel for the indulgent reader, but simply writing for my own pleasure, there is no necessity for my having recourse to the customary devices of the literary gentlemen. So I will say at once, without further procrastination, that Liza, from the very first day, fell passionately in love with the Prince, and the Prince fell in love with her—partly for the lack of anything to do, but also partly because Liza really was a very charming creature. There

was nothing remarkable in the fact that they fell in love with each other. He, in all probability, had not in the least expected to find such a pearl in such a wretched shell (I am speaking of the God-forsaken town of O***), and she, up to that time, had never beheld, even in her dreams, anything in the least like this brilliant, clever, fascinating aristocrat.

After the preliminary greetings, Ozhógin introduced me to the Prince, who treated me very politely. As a rule, he was polite to every one, and despite the incommensurable distance which existed between him and our obscure rural circle, he understood not only how to avoid embarrassing any one, but even to have the appearance of being our equal, and of only happening to live in St. Petersburg.

That first evening. . . . Oh, that first evening! In the happy days of our childhood, our teachers used to narrate to us and hold up to us as an example of manly fortitude the young Lacedæmonian who, having stolen a fox and hidden it under his cloak, never once uttered a sound, but permitted the animal to devour all his entrails, and thus preferred death to dishonour. . . . I can find no better expression of my unutterable sufferings in the course of that evening, when, for the first time, I beheld the Prince by Liza's side. My persistent, constrained smile, my anguished attention, my stupid taciturnity, my pain-

ful and vain longing to depart, all this, in all probability, was extremely noticeable in its way. Not one fox alone was ravaging my vitals—jealousy, envy, the consciousness of my own insignificance, and impotent rage were rending me. I could not but admit that the Prince was really a very amiable young man. . . . I devoured him with my eyes; I really believe that I forgot to wink as I gazed at him. He did not chat with Liza exclusively, but, of course, he talked for her alone. I must have bored him extremely. . . . . He probably soon divined that he had to do with a discarded lover, but, out of compassion for me, and also from a profound sense of my perfect harmlessness, he treated me with extraordinary gentleness. You can imagine how that hurt me!

I remember that, in the course of the evening, I tried to efface my fault; I (do not laugh at me, whoever you may be under whose eyes these lines may chance to fall, especially as this was my final dream) . . . . I suddenly took it into my head, God is my witness, among the varied torments, that Liza was trying to punish me for my arrogant coldness at the beginning of my visit; that she was angry with me, and was flirting with the Prince merely out of vexation at me. I seized a convenient opportunity, and approaching her with a meek but caressing smile, I murmured: "Enough, forgive me . . . however, I

do not ask it because I am afraid "—and without awaiting her answer, I suddenly imparted to my face an unusually vivacious and easy expression, gave a wry laugh, threw my hand up over my head in the direction of the ceiling (I remember that I was trying to adjust my neckcloth), and was even on the point of wheeling round on one foot, as much as to say: "All is over, I 'm in fine spirits, let every one be in fine spirits!" but I did not wheel round, nevertheless, because I was afraid of falling, owing to an unnatural stiffness in my knees. . . Liza did not understand me in the least, looked into my face with surprise, smiled hurriedly, as though desirous of getting rid of me as promptly as possible, and again approached the Prince. Blind and deaf as I was, I could not but inwardly admit that she was not at all angry nor vexed with me at that moment; she simply was not thinking about me. The blow was decisive, my last hopes crumbled to ruin with a crash—as a block of ice penetrated with the spring sun suddenly crumbles into tiny fragments. I had received a blow on the head at the first assault, and, like the Prussians at Jena, in one day I lost everything. No, she was not angry with me! . . .

Alas! on the contrary! She herself—I could see that—was being undermined, as with a billow. Like a young sapling, which has already half deserted the bank, she bent eagerly forward

over the flood, ready to surrender to it both the first blossoming of her spring, and her whole life. Any one to whose lot it has fallen to be a witness to such an infatuation has lived through bitter moments, if he himself loved and was not beloved. I shall forever remember the devouring attention, the tender gaiety, the innocent self-forgetfulness, the glance, half-childish and already womanly, the happy smile which blossomed forth, as it were, and never left the half-parted lips and the blushing cheeks. . . . Everything of which Liza had had a dim foreboding during our stroll in the grove had now come to pass—and she, surrendering herself wholly to love, had, at the same time, grown quiet and sparkling like young wine which has ceased to ferment, because its time has come. . . .

I had the patience to sit out that first evening, and the evenings which followed . . . . all, to the very end! I could cherish no hope whatsoever. Liza and the Prince grew more and more attached to each other with every day that passed. . . . . But I positively lost all sense of my own dignity, and could not tear myself away from the spectacle of my unhappiness. I remember that one day I made an effort not to go, gave myself my word of honour in the morning that I would remain at home,—and at eight o'clock in the evening (I usually went out at seven), I jumped up like a lunatic,

put on my hat, and ran, panting, to Kiríll Matvyéevitch's.

My position was extremely awkward; I maintained obdurate silence, and sometimes for days at a stretch never uttered a sound. I have never been distinguished for eloquence, as I have already said; but now every bit of sense I had seemed to fly away in the presence of the Prince, and I remained as poor as a church mouse. Moreover, in private, I forced my unhappy brain to toil to such a degree, slowly pondering over everything I had marked or noted in the course of the preceding day, that when I returned to the Ozhógins', I hardly had enough strength left to continue my observations. They spared me as they would a sick man, I saw that. Every morning I reached a fresh, definitive decision, which had chiefly been hatched out during a sleepless night. Now I prepared to have an explanation with Liza, to give her some friendly advice . . . but when I happened to be alone with her, my tongue suddenly ceased to act, as though it had congealed, and we both painfully awaited the appearance of a third person; then, again, I wanted to flee, for good and all, leaving behind me, for the object of my affections of course, a letter filled with reproaches; and one day I set about that letter, but the sense of justice had not yet quite vanished from within me; I understood that I had no right to upbraid any one for

anything, and flung my note into the fire; again I suddenly offered the whole of myself as a sacrifice, in magnanimous fashion, and gave Liza my blessing, wishing her happiness in her love, and smiled in a gentle and friendly way on the Prince from a corner. But the hard-hearted lovers not only did not thank me for my sacrifice, they did not even perceive it, and evidently stood in no need either of my blessings or of my smiles. . . . Then, with vexation, I suddenly passed over into the diametrically opposite frame of mind. I promised myself, as I swathed myself in my cloak, Spanish fashion, to cut the lucky rival's throat from round a corner, and with the joy of a wild beast, I pictured to myself Liza's despair. . . . But, in the first place, in the town of O*** there were very few such corners, and, in the second place, a board fence, a street-lantern, a policeman in the distance. . . . No! at such a corner as that it would be more seemly to peddle rings of bread than to shed human blood. I must confess that, among other means of deliverance,—as I very indefinitely expressed it when holding a conference with myself,—I thought of appealing straight to Mr. Ozhógin . . . . of directing the attention of that nobleman to the dangerous position of his daughter, to the sad consequences of her frivolity. . . . I even began to talk with him one day on the very ticklish subject, but framed my speech so craftily

and obscurely, that he listened and listened to me, and suddenly, as though awaking from sleep, swiftly rubbed the palm of his hand all over his face, not sparing even his nose, snorted, and walked away from me.

It is needless to say that, on adopting that decision, I assured myself that I was acting from the most disinterested motives, that I was desirous of the universal welfare, that I was fulfilling the duty of a friend of the family. . . . But I venture to think that even if Kiríll Matvyéevitch had not cut short my effusions, I should still have lacked the courage to finish my monologue. I sometimes undertook, with the pompousness of an ancient sage, to weigh the Prince's merits; I sometimes comforted myself with the hope that it was merely a passing fancy, that Liza would come to her senses, that her love was not genuine love. . . . Oh, no! In a word, I do not know of a thought over which I did not brood at that time. One remedy alone, I frankly confess, never entered my head; namely, it never once occurred to me to commit suicide. Why that did not occur to me, I do not know. . . . Perhaps even then I had a foreboding that I had not long to live in any case.

It is easy to understand that, under such untoward conditions, my conduct, my behaviour toward other people, was more characterised by unnaturalness and constraint than ever. Even old

lady Ozhógin—that dull-witted being—began to shun me, and at times did not know from which side to approach me. Bizmyónkoff, always courteous and ready to be of service, avoided me. It also seemed to me then that in him I had a fellow-sufferer, that he also loved Liza. But he never replied to my hints, and, in general, talked to me with reluctance. The Prince behaved in a very friendly manner to him; I may say that the Prince respected him. Neither Bizmyónkoff nor I interfered with the Prince and Liza; but he did not shun them as I did, he did not look like a wolf nor like a victim—and gladly joined them whenever they wished it. He did not distinguish himself particularly by jocularity on such occasions, it is true; but even in times past there had been a quiet element in his mirth.

In this manner about two weeks passed. The Prince was not only good-looking and clever: he played on the piano, sang, drew very respectably, and knew how to narrate well. His anecdotes, drawn from the highest circles of society in the capital, always produced a strong impression on the hearers, which was all the more powerful because he himself did not seem to attribute any particular importance to them. . . .

The consequence of this guile, if you choose to call it so, on the Prince's part was, that in the course of his brief sojourn in the town of O*** he absolutely bewitched the whole of society there.

It is always very easy for a man from the highest circles to bewitch us steppe-dwellers. The Prince's frequent calls on the Ozhógins (he spent his evenings at their house), as a matter of course, aroused the envy of the other nobles and officials; but the Prince, being a man of the world and clever, did not neglect a single one of them, called on all of them, said at least one pleasant word to all the dames and young ladies, permitted himself to be stuffed with laboriously-heavy viands and treated to vile wines with magnificent appellations; in a word, behaved himself admirably, cautiously, and cleverly. Prince N*** was, altogether, a man of cheerful disposition, sociable, amiable by inclination, and as a matter of calculation also: how was it possible for him to be otherwise than a complete success in every way?

From the time of his arrival, every one in the house had thought that the time flew by with remarkable swiftness; everything went splendidly; old Ozhógin, although he pretended not to notice anything, was, in all probability, secretly rubbing his hands at the thought of having such a son-in-law. The Prince himself was conducting the whole affair very quietly and decorously, when, all of a sudden, an unforeseen event . . . .

Until to-morrow. To-day I am weary. These reminiscences chafe me, even on the brink of the grave. Teréntievna thought to-day that my nose

had grown even more pointed; and that 's a bad sign, they say.

March 27. The thaw continues.

Matters were in the above-described condition: the Prince and Liza loved each other, the elder Ozhógins were waiting to see what would happen; Bizmyónkoff was present also—nothing else could be said of him; I was flopping like a fish on the ice, and keeping watch to the best of my ability,—I remember that at that time I appointed to myself the task of at least not allowing Liza to perish in the snare of the seducer, and in consequence thereof, I had begun to pay particular attention to the maid-servants and the fatal "back" entrance—although, on the other hand, I sometimes dreamed for whole nights together about the touching magnanimity with which, in the course of time, I would extend my hand to the deluded victim and say to her: "The wily man has betrayed thee; but I am thy faithful friend. . . . let us forget the past and be happy!"—when, suddenly, a joyful piece of news was disseminated throughout the town: the Marshal of Nobility for the county intended to give a large ball in honour of the respected visitor, at his own estate Gornostáevka, also called Gubnyakóva. All the hierarchies and powers of the town of O*** received invitations, beginning with the chief of police and ending with the

apothecary, a remarkably pimple-faced German, with cruel pretensions to the ability to speak Russian purely, in consequence of which, he was constantly using violent expressions with absolute inappropriateness, as, for instance: "Devil take me, I feel a dashing fine fellow to-day." [1] . . . Terrible preparations began, as was fitting. One cosmetic-shop sold sixteen dark-blue jars of pomade, with the inscription, "à la jesmin" with the Russian character denoting the hard pronunciation after the *n*. The young ladies supplied themselves with stiff gowns, torturingly tight at the waist-line, and with promontories on the stomach; the mammas erected on their own heads formidable decorations, under the pretext that they were caps; the bustling fathers lay without their hind legs, as the saying is.[2] . . .

The longed-for day arrived at last. I was among those invited. The distance from the town to Gornostáevka was reckoned at nine versts. Kiríla Matvyéevitch offered me a seat in his carriage; but I declined. . . . Thus do chastised children, desirous of revenging themselves well on their parents, refuse their favourite viands at table. Moreover, I felt that my presence would embarrass Liza. Bizmyónkoff took my place. The Prince drove out in his own calash, I in a miserable drozhky, which I had

[1] The pronunciation is also indicated as being faulty.—Translator.
[2] Ran themselves off their legs.—Translator.

hired at an exorbitant price for this festive occasion.

I will not describe the ball. Everything about it was as usual: musicians with remarkably false horns in the gallery; flustered landed proprietors with antiquated families; lilac ice-cream, slimy orgeat; men in patched boots and knitted cotton gloves; provincial lions with convulsively-distorted faces; and so forth, and so forth. And all this little world circled round its sun—round the Prince. Lost in the throng, unnoticed even by the maidens of eight-and-forty with pimples on their brows and blue flowers on their temples, I kept incessantly gazing now at the Prince, now at Liza. She was very charmingly dressed and very pretty that evening. They only danced together twice (he danced the mazurka [1] with her, 't is true!), but, at all events, so it seemed to *me,* there existed between them a certain mysterious, unbroken communication. Even when he was not looking at her, was not talking to her, he seemed constantly to be addressing her, and her alone; he was handsome and brilliant, and charming with others—for her alone. She was evidently conscious that she was the queen of the ball—and beloved; her face simultaneously beamed with childish joy and innocent pride, and

[1] The mazurka, which is still a great favourite in Russia, greatly resembles the cotillon in everything except the steps, which are vivacious. Both the cotillon and the mazurka are danced—one before, the other after supper—at Court balls and other dances.—TRANSLATOR.

then suddenly was lighted up with a different, a more profound feeling. She exhaled an atmosphere of happiness. I observed all this. . . . It was not the first time I had had occasion to watch them. . . . At first this greatly pained me, then it seemed to touch me, and at last it enraged me. I suddenly felt myself remarkably malicious and, I remember, I rejoiced wonderfully over this new sensation, and even conceived a certain respect for myself. "Let 's show them that we have n't perished yet!" I said to myself. When the first sounds summoning to the mazurka thundered out, I calmly glanced around, coldly, and with much ease of manner, approached a long-faced young lady with a red and shining nose, an awkwardly gaping mouth, which looked as though it had been unhooked, and a sinewy neck, which reminded one of the handle of a bass-viol,—approached her, and curtly clicking my heels together, invited her for the dance. She wore a pink gown, which seemed to have faded recently and not quite completely; above her head quivered some sort of a faded melancholy fly on a very thick brass spring; and, altogether, the young woman was impregnated through and through, if one may so express one's self, with a sort of sour boredom and antiquated ill-success. From the very beginning of the evening, she had not stirred from her seat; no one had thought of asking her to dance. One sixteen-year-old youth,

in default of any other partner, had been on the point of appealing to this young woman, and had already taken one step in her direction, but had bethought himself, taken one look, and briskly concealed himself in the crowd. You can imagine with what joyful surprise she accepted my proposal!

I solemnly led her the whole length of the hall, found two chairs, and seated myself with her in the circle of the mazurka, the tenth pair, almost opposite the Prince, to whom, of course, the first place had been conceded. The Prince, as I have already said, was dancing with Liza. Neither my partner nor I were incommoded with invitations; consequently, we had plenty of time for conversation. Truth to tell, my lady was not distinguished by ability to utter words in coherent speech: she employed her mouth more for the execution of a strange downward smile, hitherto unbeheld by me; at the same time, she rolled her eyes upward, as though some invisible force were stretching her face; but I had no need of her eloquence. Fortunately, I felt vicious, and my partner did not inspire me with timidity. I set to criticising everything and everybody in the world, laying special stress on whipper-snappers from the capital, and Petersburg fops, and waxed so angry, at last, that my lady gradually ceased to smile, and instead of rolling her eyes upward, she suddenly began—with amazement,

it must have been—to look cross-eyed, and in such a queer way, to boot, as though she had perceived, for the first time, that she had a nose on her face; and my next neighbour, one of those lions of whom I have spoken above, more than once scanned me with a glance, even turned to me with the expression of an actor on the stage who has waked up in an unknown land, as much as to say: "Art thou still at it?" However, while I sang like a nightingale, as the saying is, I still continued to watch the Prince and Liza. They were constantly invited; but I suffered less when both of them were dancing; and even when they were sitting side by side and chatting with each other, and smiling with that gentle smile which refuses to leave the face of happy lovers,—even then I was not so greatly pained; but when Liza was fluttering through the hall with some gallant dandy, and the Prince, with her blue gauze scarf on his knees, thoughtfully followed her with his eyes, as though admiring his conquest,—then, oh, then I experienced unbearable tortures, and in my vexation I emitted such malicious remarks, that the pupils of my partner's eyes reclined completely from both sides, on her nose!

In the meantime, the mazurka was drawing to a close. . . . They began to execute the figure known as "la confidente." In this figure the lady seats herself in the centre of the circle, chooses another lady for her confidante and

whispers in her ear the name of the gentleman with whom she wishes to dance; the cavalier leads up to her the dancers, one by one, and the confidante refuses them until, at last, the happy man who has already been designated makes his appearance. Liza sat in the centre of the circle, and chose the daughter of the hostess, one of those young girls of whom it is said that they are "God bless them." [1] The Prince began to search for the chosen man. In vain did he present about half a score of young men (the hostess' daughter refused them all, with a pleasant smile), and, at last, had recourse to me. Something unusual took place in me at that moment: I seemed to wink with my whole body, and tried to decline; nevertheless, I rose and went. The Prince conducted me to Liza. . . . She did not even glance at me; the hostess' daughter shook her head in negation, the Prince turned toward me, and, prompted probably by the goose-like expression of my face, made me a profound bow. This mocking reverence, this refusal, presented to me by my triumphant rival, his negligent smile, Liza's indifferent inattention,—all this provoked an explosion on my part. I stepped up to the Prince and whispered in a frenzied rage: "I think you are permitting yourself to jeer at me?"

The Prince stared at me with scornful surprise, again took me by the hand, and with the air

[1] Utterly insignificant.—Translator.

of leading me back to my seat, replied coldly: "I?"

"Yes, you, you!"—I went on in a whisper, obeying him, nevertheless; that is to say, following him to my seat;—"you! But I do not intend to allow any frivolous Petersburg upstart . . ."

The Prince smiled calmly, almost patronisingly, gripped my hand hard, whispered: "I understand you; but this is not the proper place; we will talk it over," turned away from me, approached Bizmyónkoff and led him to Liza. The pale little petty official proved to be the chosen cavalier. Liza rose to meet him.

As I sat beside my partner with the melancholy fly on her head, I felt myself almost a hero. My heart thumped violently within me, my bosom swelled nobly under my starched shirt-front, my breath came fast and deep—and all of a sudden, I stared at the adjacent lion in so magnificent a manner, that he involuntarily wiggled the leg which was turned toward me. Having rid myself of this man, I ran my eyes over the circle of dancers. . . . It seemed to me that two or three gentlemen were gazing at me not without amazement; but, on the whole, my conversation with the Prince had not been noticed. . . . My rival was already seated on his chair, perfectly composed, and with his former smile on his face. Bizmyónkoff led Liza to her place. She gave him a friendly nod and immediately turned to

the Prince, as it seemed to me, with a certain anxiety; but he laughed in response, waved his hand gracefully, and must have said something very agreeable to her, for she flushed all over with pleasure, dropped her eyes, and then riveted them on him once more with affectionate reproach.

The heroic frame of mind which had suddenly developed in me did not disappear until the end of the mazurka; but I made no more jests, and did not criticise, and merely cast a severe and gloomy glance from time to time at my lady, who was, evidently, beginning to be afraid of me, and was reduced to a state of complete stammering and winked incessantly, when I led her to the natural stronghold of her mother, a very fat woman with a red head-dress. Having handed over the frightened young girl as behooved me, I walked off to the window, clasped my hands, and waited to see what would happen. I waited a good while. The Prince was constantly surrounded by the host,—precisely that, surrounded, as England is surrounded by the sea,—not to mention the other members of the county Marshal of the Nobility's family, and the other guests; and, moreover, he could not, without arousing universal surprise, approach such an insignificant man as I, and enter into conversation with him. This insignificance of mine, I remember, was even a source of delight

to me then. "Fiddlesticks!" I thought, as I watched him turning courteously now to one, now to another respected personage who sought the honour of being noticed by him, if only for "the twinkling of an eye," as the poets say:—"Fiddlesticks, my dear fellow! . . . . Thou wilt come to me by and by—for I have insulted thee."

At last the Prince, having cleverly got rid of the crowd of his adorers, strode past me, darted a glance, not exactly at the window, nor yet exactly at my hair, was on the point of turning away, and suddenly came to a halt, as though he had just remembered something.

"Akh, yes!"—he said, addressing me with a smile;—"by the way, I have a little matter of business with you."

Two landed proprietors, the most persistent of all, who were obstinately following up the Prince, probably thought that the "little matter of business" was connected with the service, and respectfully retreated. The Prince put his arm in mine, and led me to one side. My heart thumped in my breast.

"You,"—he began, drawling out the word *you,* and staring at my chin with a contemptuous expression which, strange to say, was infinitely becoming to his fresh, handsome face,—"you said something insolent to me, I believe."

"I said what I thought,"—I retorted, raising my voice.

"Ssssh . . . . speak more quietly,"—he remarked:—"well-bred men do not shout. Perhaps you would like to fight with me?"

"That is your affair,"—I replied, drawing myself up.

"I shall be compelled to call you out,"—he said carelessly,—"if you do not withdraw your expressions. . . ."

"I have no intention of withdrawing anything,"—I retorted proudly.

"Really?"—he remarked, not without a sneering smile.—"In that case,"—he went on, after a brief pause,—"I shall have the honour to send my second to you to-morrow."

"Very well, sir,"—I said in the most indifferent tone I could muster.

The Prince bowed slightly.

"I cannot forbid you to think me a frivolous man,"—he added, arrogantly narrowing his eyes; —"but it is impossible that the Princes N*** should be upstarts. Farewell for the present, Mr. . . . Mr. Shtukatúrin."

He quickly turned his back on me, and again approached his host, who had already begun to grow agitated.

"Mr. Shtukatúrin"! . . . . My name is Tchulkatúrin. . . . I could find no reply to make to this last insult of his, and only stared after him in a violent rage.—"Farewell until to-morrow," I whispered, setting my teeth, and immediately

hunted up an officer of my acquaintance, Captain Koloberdyáeff of the uhlans, a desperate carouser and a splendid fellow, narrated to him in a few words my quarrel with the Prince, and asked him to be my second. He, of course, immediately consented, and I wended my way homeward.

I could not get to sleep all night—from agitation, not from pusillanimity. I am no coward. I even thought very little indeed about the impending possibility of losing my life, that highest good on earth, according to the Germans. I thought of Liza only, of my dead hopes, of what I ought to do. "Ought I to try to kill the Prince?" I asked myself, and, of course, wanted to kill him,—not out of vengeance, but out of a desire for Liza's good. "But she will not survive that blow," I went on. "No, it will be better to let him kill me!"

I confess that it was also pleasant to me to think that I, an obscure man from the country, had forced so important a personage to fight a duel with me.

Dawn found me engrossed in these cogitations; and later in the morning, Koloberdyáeff presented himself.

"Well,"—he asked me, noisily entering my bedroom,—"and where 's the Prince's second?"

"Why, good gracious!"—I replied with vexation,—"it 's only seven o'clock in the morn-

ing now; I presume the Prince is still fast asleep."

"In that case,"—returned the irrepressible cavalry-captain,—"order them to give me some tea. I have a headache from last night's doings. . . . . I have n't even been undressed. However,"—he added with a yawn,—"I rarely do undress anyway."

Tea was served to him. He drank six glasses with rum, smoked four pipes, told me that on the preceding day he had bought for a song a horse which the coachmen had given up as a bad job, and intended to break it in by tying up one of its forelegs,—and fell asleep, without undressing, on the couch, with his pipe still in his mouth. I rose, and put my papers in order. One note of invitation from Liza, the only note I had received from her, I was on the point of putting in my breast, but changed my mind, and tossed it into a box. Koloberdyáeff was snoring faintly, with his head hanging down from the leather cushions. . . . I remember that I surveyed for a long time his dishevelled, dashing, care-free and kindly face. At ten o'clock my servant announced the arrival of Bizmyónkoff. The Prince had selected him for his second.

Together we roused the soundly-sleeping captain. He rose, stared at us with eyes owlishly stupid from sleep, and in a hoarse voice asked for vodka;—he recovered himself, and after hav-

ing exchanged salutes with Bizmyónkoff, went out with him into the next room for consultation. The conference of the seconds did not last long. A quarter of an hour later they both came to me in my bedroom; Koloberdyáeff announced to me that " we shall fight to-day, at three o'clock, with pistols." I silently bowed my head, in token of assent. Bizmyónkoff immediately took leave of us, and drove away. He was somewhat pale and inwardly agitated, like a man who is not accustomed to that sort of performance, but was very polite and cold. I seemed, somehow, to feel ashamed in his presence, and I did not dare to look him in the eye.

Koloberdyáeff began to talk about his horse again. This conversation was very much to my taste. I was afraid he might mention Liza. But my good captain was no scandal-monger, and, more than that, he despised all women, calling them, God knows why, " salad." At two o'clock we lunched, and at three were already on the field of action—in that same birch-grove where I had once strolled with Liza, a couple of paces from that cliff.

We were the first to arrive. But the Prince and Bizmyónkoff did not make us wait long for them. The Prince was, without exaggeration, as fresh as a rose; his brown eyes gazed out with extreme affability from beneath the visor of his military cap. He was smoking a straw cigar,

and on catching sight of Koloberdyáeff he shook hands with him in a cordial manner. He even bowed very charmingly to me. I, on the contrary, felt conscious that I was pale, and my hands, to my intense vexation, were trembling slightly; . . . my throat was dry. . . Never, up to that time, had I fought a duel. "O God!" I thought; "if only that sneering gentleman does not take my agitation for timidity!" I inwardly consigned my nerves to all the fiends; but on glancing, at last, straight at the Prince's face, and catching on his lips an almost imperceptible smile, I suddenly became inflated with wrath, and immediately recovered my equanimity.

In the meantime, our seconds had arranged the barrier, had paced off the distance, and loaded the pistols. Koloberdyáeff did most of the active part; Bizmyónkoff chiefly watched him. It was a magnificent day—quite equal to the day of the never-to-be-forgotten stroll. The dense azure of the sky again peeped through the gilded green of the leaves. Their rustling seemed to excite me. The Prince continued to smoke his cigar, as he leaned his shoulder against the trunk of a linden. . . .

"Be so good as to take your places, gentlemen; all is ready,"—said Koloberdyáeff at last, handing us the pistols.

The Prince retreated a few paces, halted, and

turning his head back over his shoulder, asked me: "And do you still refuse to withdraw your words?" . . . I tried to answer him; but my voice failed me, and I contented myself with a disdainful motion of the hand. The Prince laughed again, and took his place. We began to approach each other. I raised my pistol, and was on the point of taking aim at the breast of my enemy,—at that moment he really was my enemy,—but suddenly elevated the barrel, as though some one had jogged my elbow, and fired. The Prince staggered, raised his left hand to his left temple —a thin stream of blood trickled down his cheek from beneath his white wash-leather glove. Bizmyónkoff flew to him.

"It is nothing,"—he said, taking off his cap, which had been perforated;—"if it did not enter my head, that means it is only a scratch."

He calmly pulled a batiste handkerchief from his pocket, and laid it on his curls, which were wet with blood. I looked at him as though petrified, and did not stir from the spot.

"Please go to the barrier!"—remarked Koloberdyáeff to me with severity.

I obeyed.

"Shall the duel go on?"—he added, addressing Bizmyónkoff.

Bizmyónkoff made him no reply; but the Prince, without removing the handkerchief from the wound, nor even giving himself the satis-

faction of teasing me at the barrier, replied with a smile: "The duel is ended," and fired into the air. I nearly wept with vexation and rage. That man, by his magnanimity, had definitively trampled me in the mud, had cut my throat. I wanted to protest, I wanted to demand that he should fire at me; but he stepped up to me, and offering me his hand, "Everything is forgotten between us, is it not?"—he said, in a cordial voice.

I cast a glance at his pale face, at that blood-stained handkerchief, and utterly losing my head, blushing with shame, and annihilated, I pressed his hand. . .

"Gentlemen!"—he added, addressing the seconds:—"I hope that all this will remain a secret?"

"Of course!"—exclaimed Koloberdyáeff,—"but, Prince, allow me. . . ."

And he himself bound up his head.

The Prince, as he departed, bowed to me once more; but Bizmyónkoff did not even bestow a glance on me. Slain,—morally slain,—I returned home with Koloberdyáeff.

"But what ails you?"—the captain asked me. "Calm yourself; the wound is not dangerous. He can dance to-morrow, if he likes. Or are you sorry that you did not kill him? In that case, you 're wrong; he 's a splendid fellow."

"Why did he spare me?!"—I muttered at last.

"Oho! so that 's it!"—calmly retorted the captain. . . "Okh, these romancers will be the death of me!"

I positively refuse to describe my tortures in the course of the evening which followed this unlucky duel. My pride suffered inexpressibly. It was not my conscience which tormented me; the consciousness of my stupidity annihilated me. "I myself have dealt myself the last, the final blow!" I kept repeating as I paced my room with long strides. . . . "The Prince wounded by me and forgiving me . . . . yes, Liza is his now. Nothing can save her now, nor hold her back on the brink of perdition." I was very well aware that our duel could not remain a secret, in spite of the Prince's words; in any case, it could not remain a secret to Liza. "The Prince is not so stupid"—I whispered in a frenzy—"as not to take advantage of it." . . . And, nevertheless, I was mistaken: the whole town heard about the duel and its actual cause,—on the very next day, of course; but it was not the Prince who had babbled—on the contrary; when he had presented himself to Liza with a bandaged head and an excuse which had been prepared in advance, she already knew everything. . . Whether Bizmyónkoff had betrayed me, or whether the news had reached her by other roads, I cannot say. And, after all, is it possible to conceal anything in a small town? You can imagine how Liza took it,

how the whole Ozhógin family took it! As for me, I suddenly became the object of universal indignation, of loathing, a monster, a crazily jealous man, and a cannibal. My few acquaintances renounced me, as they would have renounced a leper. The town authorities appealed to the Prince with a proposition to chastise me in a stern and exemplary manner; only the persistent and importunate entreaties of the Prince himself warded off the calamity which menaced my head. This man was fated to annihilate me in every way. By his magnanimity he had shut me up as though with my coffin-lid. It is needless to say that the Ozhógins' house was immediately closed to me. Kiríla Matvyéevitch even returned to me a plain pencil, which I had left at his residence. In reality, he was precisely the last man who should have been incensed with me. My "crazy" jealousy, as they called it in the town, had defined, elucidated, so to speak, the relations between Liza and the Prince. The old Ozhógins themselves and the other residents began to look upon him almost in the light of a betrothed husband. In reality, that could not have been quite agreeable to him; but he liked Liza very much; and moreover, at that time he had not, as yet, attained his object. . . . With all the tact of a clever man of the world, he accommodated himself to his new position, immediately entered into the spirit of his new part, as the saying is. . . .

But I! . . . I then gave up in despair, so far as I myself was concerned, and so far as my future was concerned. When sufferings reach such a pitch that they make our whole inward being crack and creak like an overloaded cart, they ought to cease being ridiculous. . . . But no! laughter not only accompanies tears to the end, to exhaustion, to the point where it is impossible to shed any more of them,—not at all! it still rings and resounds at a point where the tongue grows dumb and lamentation itself dies away. . . . And then, in the first place, as I have no intention of appearing absurd even to myself, and in the second place, as I am frightfully tired, I shall defer the continuation and, God willing, the conclusion of my story until to-morrow. . . .

March 29. A light frost; last night there was a thaw.

Yesterday I was unable to go on with my diary; like Póprishshtchin, I lay most of the time in bed, and chatted with Teréntievna. There 's a woman for you! Sixty years ago she lost her first betrothed from the plague, she has outlived all her children, she herself is unpardonably old, she drinks tea to her heart's content, she is well-fed, warmly clad; but what do you think she talked to me about yesterday? I had ordered that the cape of an old livery-coat should be given to another utterly denuded old woman for

a waistcoat (she wears a breast-piece in the shape of a waistcoat). . . . The cape was pretty thoroughly eaten by moths, so why should not she have it? "Well, it strikes me that I 'm your nurse. . . . O-okh, my dear little father, 't is a sin for you to do that. . . . And have n't I been tending you?" . . . . and so forth. The merciless old woman fairly wore me out with her reproaches. . . . But let us return to the story.

So, then, I suffered like a dog which has had the hind part of its body run over by a wheel. Only then,—only after my expulsion from the Ozhógins' house,—did I become definitively aware how much pleasure a man may derive from the contemplation of his own unhappiness. Oh, men! ye are, in reality, a pitiful race! . . . Well, but that is in the nature of a philosophical remark. . . . I passed my days in utter solitude, and only in the most roundabout and even base ways was I able to find out what was going on in the Ozhógin family, what the Prince was doing. My servant struck up an acquaintance with the great-aunt of the wife of his coachman. This acquaintance afforded me some alleviation, and my servant speedily was able, from my hints and gifts, to divine what it behooved him to talk about with his master, when he was pulling off the latter's boots at night. Sometimes I chanced to meet in the street some member of the Ozhógin family,

Bizmyónkoff, or the Prince. . . . With the Prince and Bizmyónkoff I exchanged bows, but I did not enter into conversation. I saw Liza thrice in all: once with her mamma, in a milliner's shop, once in an open calash with her father, her mother, and the Prince; once in church. Of course, I did not venture to approach her, and only gazed at her from afar. In the shop she was anxious but cheerful. . . . She was ordering something for herself, and busily trying on ribbons. Her mother was gazing at her, with hands clasped on her stomach, her nose elevated, and indulging in that stupid and affectionate smile which is permissible only to fond mothers. Liza was in the calash with the Prince. . . . I shall never forget that meeting! The old Ozhógins were sitting on the back seat of the calash, the Prince and Liza in front. She was paler than usual; two pink streaks were barely discernible on her cheeks. She was half-turned toward the Prince; supporting herself on her outstretched right hand (she was holding her parasol in her left), and wearily bending her head, she was gazing straight into his face with her expressive eyes. At that moment she was surrendering herself utterly to him, trusting him irrevocably. I did not have a chance to get a good look at his face,—the calash dashed past too swiftly,—but it seemed to me that he also was deeply moved.

The third time I saw her was in church. Not more than ten days had elapsed since the day when I had encountered her in the calash with the Prince, not more than three weeks since my duel. The business on account of which the Prince had come to O*** had long been finished; but he still deferred his departure; he reported in Petersburg that he was ill. In the city, people were expecting every day a formal proposal on his part to Kiríla Matvyéevitch. I myself was only waiting for this last blow, in order to retire forever. The town of O*** had grown loathsome to me. I could not sit still at home, and from morning till night I dragged myself about the suburbs. One grey, wet day, as I was returning from a stroll which had been cut short by the rain, I stepped into the church. The evening service was only just beginning, there were very few people present; I looked about me, and suddenly, near a window, I descried a familiar profile. At first I did not recognise it; that pale face, that extinct glance, those sunken cheeks—could it be the same Liza whom I had seen two weeks before? Enveloped in a cloak, with no hat on her head, illuminated from one side by a cold ray of light, which fell through the broad window of white glass, she was staring immovably at the ikonostásis, and, apparently, making a violent effort to pray, striving to escape from some sort of dejected rigidity. A fat, red-

cheeked page with yellow cartridge-cases on his breast [1] was standing behind her, with his hands clasped behind his back, and staring with sleepy surprise at his mistress. I shuddered all over; I started to go to her, but stopped short. A torturing forboding gripped my breast. Liza never stirred until the very end of vespers. All the congregation departed, a chanter began to sweep out the church, and still she did not stir from her place. The page approached her, and touched her gown; she glanced round, passed her hand over her face, and went away. I escorted her, at a distance, to her house, then returned home.

"She is ruined!" I exclaimed, as I entered my room.

Being a man, I do not know to this day what was the nature of my sensations then. I remember that, folding my arms, I flung myself on the divan, and riveted my eyes on the floor; but I did not know why, only, in the midst of my grief, I seemed to be pleased at something. . . . I would not have admitted that on any account, if I were not writing for myself. . . . I really had been tortured by painful, terrible forebodings . . . . and, who knows, perhaps I should have been disconcerted if they had not been fulfilled. "Such is the human heart!" some middle-aged Russian teacher would exclaim at this

[1] The page is called a kazák, and dressed accordingly. —TRANSLATOR.

point, in an expressive voice, raising on high his thick forefinger adorned with a carnelian ring. But what care we for the opinion of a Russian teacher with an expressive voice, and a carnelian ring on his finger?

Be that as it may, my forebodings had turned out to be correct. The news suddenly spread through the town that the Prince had taken his departure, in consequence, nominally, of an order from Petersburg; that he had gone away without having made any proposal of marriage either to Kiríla Matvyéevitch or to his spouse, and that Liza would continue to mourn his perfidy to the end of her days. The Prince's departure had been entirely unexpected, because, as late as the evening before, his coachman, according to the assertions of my servant, had not in the least suspected his master's intention. This news threw me into a fever. I immediately dressed myself, was on the point of running to the Ozhógins'; but after thinking the matter over, I concluded that it would be decorous to wait until the following day. However, I lost nothing by remaining at home. That evening there ran in to see me a certain Pandopipópulo, a Greek on his travels, who had accidentally got stranded in O***, a gossip of the first magnitude, who, more than any one else, had seethed with indignation against me for my duel with the Prince. He did not even give my servant time to announce him, but

fairly forced his way into my room, shook me vigorously by the hand, made a thousand excuses for his conduct, called me a model of magnanimity and fearlessness, depicted the Prince in the blackest colours, did not spare the old Ozhógins, whom Fate had, in his opinion, justly punished; he gave a hit at Liza also in passing, and ran off, after kissing me on the shoulder. Among other things, I learned from him that the Prince, *en vrai grand seigneur,* on the eve of his departure, had replied coldly to a delicate hint from Kiríla Matvyéevitch, that he had not intended to deceive any one and was not thinking of marrying; had risen, and made his bow, and that was the last they had seen of him. . . .

On the following day, I betook myself to the Ozhógins'. The blear-eyed footman, at my appearance, sprang from the bench in the anteroom with lightning-like swiftness; I ordered him to announce me. The lackey hastened off, and immediately returned: "Please enter," said he; "I am ordered to invite you in." I entered Kiríla Matvyéevitch's study. . . . Until to-morrow.

March 30. A frost.

So, then, I entered Kiríla Matvyéevitch's study. I would give a good deal to any one who could have shown me my own face at the moment when that worthy official, hastily wrapping his Bu-

kharâ dressing-gown round him, stepped forward to meet me with outstretched hands. I must have fairly radiated an atmosphere of modest triumph, patronising sympathy, and limitless magnanimity. . . . I felt that I was something in the nature of Scipio Africanus. Ozhógin was visibly embarrassed and depressed, avoided my eye, and shifted from foot to foot where he stood. I also noticed that he talked in an unnaturally-loud manner, and altogether expressed himself very indefinitely;—indefinitely, but with fervour, did he beg my pardon, indefinitely alluded to the departed visitor, added a few general and indefinite remarks about the deceitfulness and instability of earthly blessings, and suddenly, becoming conscious of a tear in his eye, he hastened to take a pinch of snuff, probably with the object of deluding me as to the cause which was making him weep. . . . He used green Russian snuff, and every one knows that that plant makes even old men shed tears, athwart which the human eye peers forth dimly and senselessly for the space of several minutes.

As a matter of course I treated the old man very cautiously, inquired after the health of his wife and daughter, and at once turned the conversation artfully on the interesting question of rotation of crops. I was dressed as usual; but the feeling of soft decorum and gentle condescension which filled my breast, afforded me a

festive and fresh sensation, as though I were wearing a white waistcoat and a white neckcloth. One thing disturbed me: the thought of meeting Liza again. . . . At last Ozhógin himself proposed to conduct me to his wife. That good, but stupid woman, on beholding me, at first became frightfully embarrassed; but her brain was incapable of preserving one and the same impression for long together, and therefore she speedily recovered her equanimity. At last I saw Liza. . . . She entered the room. . . .

I had expected that I should find in her an abashed, penitent sinner, and had already in advance imparted to my face the most cordial and encouraging expression. . . . Why should I lie? I really loved her and thirsted for the happiness of forgiving her, of putting out my hand to her; but, to my unspeakable amazement, in reply to my significant bow, she laughed coldly, remarked carelessly: "Ah? so it 's you?" and immediately turned away from me. Her laugh appeared to me forced, it is true, and, in any case, was ill-suited to her dreadfully emaciated face. . . . But, nevertheless, I had not expected such a reception. . . . I stared at her in astonishment. . . . What a change had taken place in her! Between the former child and this woman there was nothing in common. She seemed to have grown taller, to have drawn herself up straighter; all her features, especially her lips, seemed to have ac-

quired a more defined outline . . . . her gaze had become more profound, more firm, and dark. I sat with the Ozhógins until dinner; she rose, left the room and returned to it, calmly replied to questions, and deliberately took no heed of me. I could see that she wished to make me feel that I was not worthy even of her anger, although I had come near killing her lover. At last I lost patience: a malicious hint broke from my lips. . . . She shuddered, darted a swift glance at me, rose, and, walking to the window, said in a voice which trembled slightly: "You can say anything you like, but you must know that I love that man and shall always love him, and do not consider him to blame toward me in the slightest degree, on the contrary . . . ." Her voice broke with a tinkle, she paused . . . . tried to control herself, but could not, and burst into tears and left the room. . . . The elder Ozhógins grew confused. . . . I shook hands with both of them, sighed, cast a glance upward, and went away.

I am too weak, there is too little time left to me, I am not in a condition to describe with my former minuteness this new series of torturing meditations, firm intentions, and other fruits of the so-called inward conflict, which started up in me after the renewal of my acquaintance with the Ozhógins. I did not doubt that Liza still loved and would long love the Prince . . . . but, being a man tamed now by circumstances and

who had resigned himself to his fate, I did not even dream of her love: I merely desired her friendship, I wanted to win her confidence, her respect, which, according to the assertions of experienced persons, is regarded as the most trustworthy foundation for happiness in marriage. . . . . Unhappily, I had lost sight of one rather important circumstance—namely, that Liza had hated me ever since the day of the duel. I learned this too late.

I began to frequent the Ozhógins' house as of yore. Kiríla Matvyéevitch was more cordial to me and petted me more than ever. I even have cause to think that at the time he would have gladly given me his daughter, although I was not an enviable match: public opinion condemned him and Liza, and, on the other hand, extolled me to the skies. Liza's treatment of me did not change: she maintained silence most of the time, obeyed when she was bidden to eat, displayed no outward signs of grief, but, nevertheless, she wasted away like a candle. I must do justice to Kiríla Matvyéevitch: he spared her in every possible way; old Madame Ozhógin merely bristled up as she looked at her poor child. There was only one man whom Liza did not avoid, although she did not talk much to him, namely, Bizmyónkoff. The old Ozhógins treated him sternly, even roughly; they could not pardon him for having acted as second; but he continued to come to their

house, as though he did not notice their disfavour. With me he was very cold, and,—strange to say! —I felt afraid of him, as it were. This state of things lasted for about a fortnight. At last, after a sleepless night, I made up my mind to have an explanation with Liza, to lay bare my heart before her; to tell her that, notwithstanding the past, notwithstanding all sorts of rumours and gossip, I should regard myself as too happy if she would favour me with her hand, would restore to me her trust. I really, without jesting, imagined that I was exhibiting, as the compendiums of literature put it, an unprecedented example of magnanimity, and that she would give her consent out of sheer amazement. In any case, I wanted to clear up the situation with her, and escape, definitively, from my state of uncertainty.

Behind the Ozhógins' house lay a fairly spacious garden, terminating in a linden coppice, neglected and overgrown. In the middle of this coppice rose an old arbour in the Chinese style; a board fence separated the garden from a blind-alley. Liza sometimes strolled for hours at a time alone in this garden. Kiríla Matvyéevitch knew this and had given orders that she was not to be disturbed, and kept a watch over her: "Let her grief wear itself out," he said. When she was not to be found in the house, it was only necessary to ring a small bell on the porch at

dinner-time, and she immediately presented herself, with the same obdurate taciturnity on her lips and in her gaze, and some sort of crumpled leaf in her hand. So, one day, observing that she was not in the house, I pretended that I was making ready to depart, took leave of Kiríla Matvyéevitch, put on my hat, and emerged from the anteroom into the courtyard, and from the courtyard into the street, but instantly, with extraordinary swiftness, slipped back through the gate and made my way past the kitchen into the garden. Luckily, no one espied me. Without pausing long to think, I entered the grove with hasty steps. Before me, on the path, stood Liza. My heart began to beat violently in my breast. I stopped short, heaved a deep sigh, and was on the point of approaching her, when all of a sudden, without turning round, she raised her hand and began to listen. . . . From behind the trees, in the direction of the blind-alley, two knocks rang out clearly, as though some one were tapping on the fence. Liza clapped her hands, a faint squeaking of the wicket-gate became audible, and Bizmyónkoff emerged from the coppice. I promptly hid myself behind a tree. Liza turned silently toward him. . . . Silently he drew her arm through his, and both walked softly along the path. I stared after them in astonishment. They halted, looked about them, disappeared behind the bushes, appeared again, and finally entered the ar-

bour. This arbour was circular in shape, a tiny little building, with one door and one small window; in the centre was to be seen an old table with a single leg, overgrown with fine green moss; two faded little plank divans stood at the sides, at some distance from the damp and dark-hued walls. Here, on unusually hot days, and that once a year, and in former times, they had been in the habit of drinking tea. The door would not shut at all; the frame had long ago fallen out of the window and, catching by one corner, dangled mournfully, like the wounded wing of a bird. I stole up to the arbour and cautiously glanced through a crack of the window. Liza was sitting on one of the little divans, with drooping head; her right hand lay on her lap; Bizmyónkoff was holding the left in both his hands. He was gazing at her with sympathy.

"How do you feel to-day?"—he asked her, in a low voice.

"Just the same!"—she replied;—"neither better nor worse.—Emptiness, frightful emptiness!"—she added, dejectedly raising her eyes.

Bizmyónkoff made no reply.

"What think you," she went on;—"will he write to me again?"

"I think not, Lizavéta Kiríllovna!"

She remained silent for a while.

"And, in fact, what is there for him to write about? He told me everything in his first letter.

I could not be his wife; but I was happy . . . not for long. . . . I was happy. . . ."

Bizmyónkoff lowered his eyes.

"Akh,"—she went on with animation;—"if you only knew how loathsome that Tchulkatúrin is to me! . . . It always seems to me that I can see . . . . . his blood . . . on that man's hands." (I writhed behind my crack.) "However,"—she added thoughtfully;—"who knows,—perhaps had it not been for that duel . . . . Akh, when I beheld him wounded, I immediately felt that I was all his."

"Tchulkatúrin loves you,"—remarked Bizmyónkoff.

"What do I care for that? Do I need any one's love? . . ." She paused, and added slowly: . . . "except yours. Yes, my friend, your love is indispensable to me: without you I should have perished. You have helped me to endure terrible moments. . . ."

She ceased. . . . Bizmyónkoff began to stroke her hand with paternal tenderness. "There 's no help for it, there 's no help for it, Lizavéta Kiríllovna,"—he repeated, several times in succession.

"Yes, and now,"—she said dully,—"I think I should die if it were not for you. You alone sustain me; moreover, you remind me . . . . For you know everything. Do you remember how handsome he was that day? . . . . But forgive me: it must be painful for you. . . ."

"Speak, speak! What do you mean? God bless you!"—Bizmyónkoff interrupted her. She squeezed his hand.

"You are very kind, Bizmyónkoff,"—she went on:—"you are as kind as an angel. What am I to do? I feel that I shall love him until I die. I have forgiven him, I am grateful to him. May God grant him happiness! May God give him a wife after his own heart!"—And her eyes filled with tears.—"If only he does not forget me, if only he will now and then recall his Liza to mind. Let us go out,"—she added, after a brief pause.

Bizmyónkoff raised her hand to his lips.

"I know,"—she began with warmth,—"every one is blaming me, every one is casting stones at me now. Let them! All the same, I would not exchange my unhappiness for their happiness . . . no! no! . . . He did not love me long, but he did love me! He never deceived me: he did not tell me that I was to be his wife; I myself never thought of such a thing. Only poor papa hoped for that. And now I am still not utterly unhappy: there remains to me the memory, and however terrible the consequences may be . . . . I am stifling here . . . . it was here that I saw him for the last time. . . . Let us go out into the air."

They rose. I barely managed to leap aside and hide behind a thick linden. They came out of the arbour and, so far as I was able to judge from the sound of their footsteps, went off into the grove.

I do not know how long I had been standing there, without stirring from the spot, absorbed in a sort of irrational surprise, when suddenly the sound of footsteps became audible again. I started and peered cautiously from my ambush. Bizmyónkoff and Liza were returning by the same path. Both were greatly agitated, especially Bizmyónkoff. He had been weeping, apparently. Liza halted, gazed at him, and uttered the following words distinctly: "I consent, Bizmyónkoff. I would not have consented, had you merely wished to save me, to extricate me from a frightful position; but you love me, you know all—and you love me; I shall never find a more trustworthy, faithful friend. I will be your wife."

Bizmyónkoff kissed her hand; she smiled sadly at him, and went to the house. Bizmyónkoff dashed into the thicket, and I went my way. As Bizmyónkoff had probably said to Liza precisely what I had intended to say to her, and as she had given him precisely the answer which I had hoped to hear from her, there was no necessity for my troubling myself further. A fortnight later she married him. The old Ozhógins were glad to get any bridegroom.

Well, tell me now, am not I a superfluous man? Did not I play in the whole of that affair the part of a superfluous man? The rôle of the Prince . . . . as to that, there is nothing to be said; the rôle of Bizmyónkoff also is comprehensible . . . .

But I? Why was I mixed up in it? . . . what a stupid, fifth wheel to the cart I was! . . . Akh, 't is bitter, bitter! . . . So now, as the stevedores on the Volga say: "Heave-ho! heave-ho!"[1]— one more little day, then another, and nothing will be either bitter or sweet to me any more.

March 31.

THINGS are bad. I write these lines in bed. The weather has changed suddenly since yesterday. To-day is hot—almost a summer day. Everything is thawing, crumbling, and streaming. There is an odour of ploughed earth in the air: a heavy, powerful, oppressive odour. The steam is rising everywhere. The sun is fairly beating, fairly blazing down. I am in a bad way. I feel that I am decomposing.

I started out to write a diary, and instead of that, what have I done? I have narrated one incident out of my own life. I have been babbling, sleeping memories have waked up and carried me away. I have written leisurely, in detail, as though I still had years before me; and now, lo, there is no time to continue. Death, death is advancing. I can already hear its menacing crescendo. . . Time 's up. . . . Time 's up! . . .

[1] The *burlaki* on the Volga used to tow the barges from Ástrakhan to Nízhni Nóvgorod Fair, against the current. The stevedores also are called *burlaki*, and, as they lade the barges, their chantey runs (more literally than I have translated it above): "Yet another little time, yet again, . . ." and so forth.—TRANSLATOR.

And where 's the harm? Does it make any difference what I have told? In the presence of death all the last earthly vanities disappear. I feel that I am quieting down; I am becoming more simple, more clear. I have acquired sense, but too late! . . . 'T is strange! I am growing still—'t is true, and, nevertheless, I am overcome with dread. Yes, I am overcome with dread. Half-leaning over the voiceless, yawning gulf, I shudder, I turn aside, with eager attention I gaze about in all directions. Every object is doubly dear to me. I cannot gaze my fill at my poor, cheerless room, as I bid farewell to every tiny fleck on my walls! Sate yourselves for the last time, ye eyes of mine! Life is withdrawing; it is flowing evenly and softly away from me, like the shore from the glances of the traveller by sea. The aged, yellow face of my nurse, bound up in a dark kerchief, the hissing samovár on the table, the pot of geranium in front of the window, and thou, my poor dog, Trésor, the pen wherewith I indite these lines, my own hand, I see you now . . . . there you are, there. . . . Is it possible . . . . to-day perhaps . . . I shall see you no more? 'T is painful for a living being to part with life! Why dost thou fawn on me, poor dog? Why dost thou lean thy breast against my bed convulsively tucking under thy short tail, and never taking from me thy kind, sad eyes? Art thou sorry for me? Dost thou

already feel instinctively that thy master will soon be no more? Akh, if I could also pass in review mentally all the objects in my room! I know that these memories are cheerless and insignificant, but I have no others. Emptiness, frightful emptiness! as Liza said.

Oh, my God! My God! Here I am dying. . . . My heart capable of love, and ready to love, will soon cease to beat. . . And can it be that it will be silenced forever, without having even once tasted of happiness, without having a single time swelled beneath the sweet burden of joy? Alas! 't is impossible, impossible, I know. . . If at least now, before my death—and death, nevertheless, is a sacred thing, for it elevates every being—if some charming, sad, friendly voice were to sing over me the parting song of my own woe, perhaps I might become reconciled to it. But to die is stupid, stupid. . .

I believe I am beginning to rave.

Farewell life, farewell my garden, and you, my lindens! When summer comes, see that you do not forget to cover yourselves with flowers from top to bottom . . . . and may good people lie in your fragrant shade, on the cool grass beneath the lisping murmur of your leaves, lightly agitated by the breeze. Farewell, farewell! Farewell everything, and forever!

Farewell, Liza! I have written these two words—and have almost laughed. That exclam-

ation seems bookish. I seem to be composing a sentimental novel, and ending up a despairing letter. . . .

To-morrow is the first of April. Can it be that I shall die to-morrow? That would be rather indecorous even. However, it befits me. . .

How the doctor did gabble to-day. . . .

April 1.

'T is over. Life is ended. I really shall die to-day. It is hot out of doors . . . almost stifling . . . . or is it that my chest is already refusing to breathe? My little comedy has been played through. The curtain is falling.

In becoming annihilated, I shall cease to be superfluous. . .

Akh, how brilliant that sun is! Those powerful rays exhale eternity. . .

Farewell, Teréntievna! . . . This morning, as she sat by the window, she fell to weeping . . . . perhaps over me . . . and perhaps, because she herself must die before long also. I made her promise " not to hurt " Trésor.

It is difficult for me to write. . . . I drop my pen. . . 'T is time! Death is already drawing near with increasing rumble, like a carriage by night on the pavement: it is here, it is hovering around me, like that faint breath which made the hair of the prophet stand upright on his head. . .

I am dying. . . Live on, ye living.

And may the young life play
At the entrance of the grave,
And Nature the indifferent
With beauty beam forever!

Note of the Editor.—Under this last line there is the profile of a head with a large crest-curl and moustache, with eyes *en face*, and ray-like eyelashes; and under the head some one has written the following words:

The abov manuscript has been read
And the Contints Thereof Bin Approved
By Pyetr Zudotyéshin
M M M M
Dear Sir
Pyetr Zudotyéshin.
My Dear Sir.

But as the chirography of these lines does not in the least agree with the chirography in which the remainder of the note-book is written, the editor considers himself justified in concluding that the above-mentioned lines were added afterward by another person; the more so, as it has come to his (the editor's) knowledge that Mr. Tchulkatúrin really did die on the night of April 1-2, 18 . . , in his natal estate—Ovétchi Vódy.

THREE PORTRAITS

(1840)

THREE PORTRAITS

"THE neighbours" constitute one of the most serious drawbacks to country life. I knew one landed proprietor of the Government of Vólogda, who, at every convenient opportunity, was wont to repeat the following words: "Thank God, I have no neighbours!"—and I must admit that I could not refrain from envying that lucky mortal.

My little village is situated in one of the most thickly-populated governments of Russia. I am surrounded by a vast multitude of petty neighbours, beginning with the well-intentioned and respected landed proprietors, clad in capacious dress-coats, and more capacious waistcoats,—and ending with arrant roysterers, who wear hussar-jackets with long sleeves and the so-called "fimsky" knot on the back. In the ranks of these nobles, however, I have accidentally discovered one very amiable young fellow. Once upon a time he was in the military service, then he retired, and settled down for good and all in the country. According to his account, he served two years in the B*** regiment; but I positively cannot understand how that man

could have discharged any duties whatsoever, not only for the space of two years, but even for the space of two days. He was born "for a peaceful life, for rustic tranquillity," that is to say, for indolent, careless vegetation, which, I may remark in parenthesis, is not devoid of great and inexhaustible charms.

He enjoyed a very respectable property: without troubling himself too much about the management of his estate, he spent about ten thousand rubles [1] a year, procured for himself a capital cook (my friend was fond of good eating); he also imported from Moscow the newest French books and journals. He read nothing in Russian except the reports of his overseer, and that with great difficulty. From morning until dinner (if he did not go off hunting), he did not doff his dressing-gown; he sorted over some sketches or other pertaining to the management, or betook himself to the stable, or to the threshing-shed, and indulged in a good laugh with the peasant wives, who rattled their chains, as the saying is, in his presence, out of ostentation. After dinner my friend dressed himself before the mirror with great care, and drove off to some neighbour endowed with two or three pretty young daughters; heedlessly and pacifically, he

[1] A ruble, at the present time, is worth, on an average, about fifty-two cents. At the period here referred to, the silver ruble would purchase more than a ruble nowadays, while the paper ruble was worth very little. — TRANSLATOR.

dangled after one of them, played at blind-man's buff with them, returned home rather late, and immediately sank into heroic slumber. He could not feel bored, because he never devoted himself to absolute inaction, and he was not fastidious as to his choice of occupations, and, like a child, was amused with the smallest trifle. On the other hand, he felt no special attachment to life, and, it sometimes happened, that when it became necessary to outrun a wolf or a fox, he would launch his horse at full speed over such ravines, that to this day I cannot understand why he did not break his neck a hundred times. He belonged to the category of people who evoke in you the thought that they are not aware of their own value, that beneath their external generosity great and mighty passions are concealed; but he would have laughed in your face, if he could have guessed that you cherished such an opinion concerning him; yes, and, I am bound to admit, I think myself that if my friend was haunted in his youth by any aspiration, indistinct but powerful, toward what is very prettily called "something higher," that aspiration had long, long ago calmed down in him and pined away.

He was rather obese, and enjoyed splendid health. In our age, it is impossible not to like people who give little thought to themselves, because they are extremely rare . . . . and my friend almost completely forgot his own person.

However, I have already said too much about him, I think—and my chattering is all the more ill-placed, since he does not serve as the subject of my story. His name was Piótr Feódorovitch Lutchínoff.

One autumn day, five of us thorough-going sportsmen had assembled together at Piótr Feódorovitch's. We had spent the entire morning in the fields, had coursed two wolves and a multitude of hares, and had returned home in the ravishingly-agreeable frame of mind which invades every well-regulated man after a successful hunt.

Twilight was descending. The wind was playing over the dark fields, and noisily rocking the naked crests of the birches and lindens which surrounded Lutchínoff's house. We arrived, and alighted from our horses. . . On the porch I halted and glanced about me: long storm-clouds were crawling heavily across the grey sky; a dark-brown bush was writhing in the wind, and creaking piteously; the yellow grass bent feebly and sadly to the ground; flocks of blackbirds were flying to and fro among the mountain-ash trees, dotted with clusters of bright-scarlet berries;[1] in the slender and brittle branches of the birch-trees tomtits were hopping and whistling; the dogs were barking hoarsely in the village. Melan-

[1] A very good preserve, with a slightly wild or bitter taste, is made from these berries in Russia. It is a favourite preserve for putting in tea.—TRANSLATOR.

choly overpowered me .... for which reason I entered the dining-room with genuine pleasure. The shutters were closed; on the round table, covered with a cloth of dazzling whiteness, in the midst of crystal caraffes filled with red wine, burned eight candles in silver candlesticks; a fire blazed merrily on the hearth—and an old, very comely butler, with a huge bald spot, dressed in English fashion, stood in respectful immobility in front of another table, which was already adorned with a large soup-tureen, encircled with a light, fragrant steam. In the anteroom we had passed another respectable man, engaged in cooling the champagne—" according to the strict rules of the art."

The dinner was, as is usual on such occasions, extremely agreeable; we laughed, recounted the incidents which had occurred during the hunt, and recalled with rapture two notable " drives." After having dined rather heartily, we disposed ourselves in broad arm-chairs in front of the fireplace; a capacious silver bowl made its appearance on the table, and, a few moments later, the flitting flame of rum announced to us our host's pleasant intention to " brew a punch."—Piótr Feódorovitch was a man not lacking in taste; he knew, for example, that nothing has such deadly effect on the fancy as the even, cold, and pedantic light of lamps—therefore he ordered that only two candles should be left in

the room. Strange half-shadows quivered on the walls, produced by the fitful play of the fire on the hearth, and the flame of the punch . . . . a quiet, extremely agreeable comfort replaced in our hearts the somewhat obstreperous jollity which had reigned at dinner.

Conversations have their fates—like books (according to the Latin apothegm), like everything in the world. Our conversation on that evening was peculiarly varied and vivacious. In part it rose to decidedly important general questions, then lightly and unconstrainedly returned to the commonplaces of everyday life. . . . After chatting a good deal, we all suddenly fell silent. At such times, they say, the angel of silence flits past.

I do not know why my companions ceased talking, but I stopped because my eyes had suddenly paused on three dusty portraits in black wooden frames. The colours had been rubbed off, and here and there the canvas was warped, but the faces could still be distinguished. The middle portrait represented a woman, young in years, in a white gown with lace borders, and a tall coiffure of the eighties. On her right, against a perfectly black background, was visible the round, fat face of a good-natured Russian landed proprietor five-and-twenty years of age, with a low, broad forehead, a stubby nose, and an ingenuous smile. The powdered French coiffure was extremely out of keeping with the expres-

sion of his Slavonic countenance. The artist had depicted him in a kaftan of crimson hue with large strass buttons; in his hand he held some sort of unusual flower. The third portrait, painted by another and more experienced hand, represented a man of thirty, in a green uniform of the period of Katherine II, with red facings, a white under-waistcoat, and a thin batiste neckerchief. With one hand he leaned on a cane with a gold head, the other he had thrust into his waistcoat. His thin, swarthy face breathed forth insolent arrogance. His long, slender eyebrows almost met over his pitch-black eyes; on his pale, barely-perceptible lips played an evil smile.

"What makes you stare at those faces?"—Piótr Feódorovitch asked me.

"Because!"—I answered, looking at him.

"Would you like to hear the whole story about those three persons?"

"Pray, do us the favour to tell it,"—we replied with one voice.

Piótr Feódorovitch rose, took a candle, raised it to the portraits, and in the voice of a man who is exhibiting wild animals, "Gentlemen!" he proclaimed: "this lady is the adopted daughter of my own great-grandfather, Olga Ivánovna NN., called Lutchínoff, who died unmarried forty years ago. This gentleman,"—pointing to the portrait of the man in uniform,—"is sergeant

of the Guards, Vasíly Ivánovitch Lutchínoff, who departed this life, by the will of God, in the year one thousand seven hundred and ninety. And this gentleman, to whom I have not the honour to be related, is a certain Pável Afanásievitch Rogatchyóff, who never served anywhere, so far as I am aware. Please to note the hole which is in his breast, in the exact place of the heart. This hole, which is, as you see, regular, and three-cornered, probably could not have happened accidentally. . . . Now,"—he went on in his ordinary voice,—"please to take your seats, arm yourselves with patience, and listen."

Gentlemen (he began) I descend from a fairly ancient race. I am not proud of my descent, because my ancestors were all frightful spendthrifts. This reproach, however, does not apply to my great-grandfather, Iván Andréevitch Lutchínoff,—on the contrary, he bore the reputation of being an extraordinarily penurious and even miserly man—during the last years of his life, at all events. He passed his youth in Petersburg, and was a witness of Elizavéta's reign. In Petersburg he married, and had by his wife, who was also my great-grandmother, four children—three sons, Vasíly, Iván and Pável (my grandfather), and one daughter, Natálya. In addition to these, Iván Andréevitch took into his family the daughter of a distant relative, a full

and nameless orphan,—Olga Ivánovna, of whom I have already spoken. My great-grandfather's subjects were, probably, aware of his existence, because they were in the habit of sending to him (when no particular catastrophe had happened) a very considerable sum in quit-rents;—but they had never beheld his face. The village of Lutchínovko, deprived of the light of its master's countenance, was thriving,—when, all of a sudden, one fine morning, a heavy travelling carriage drove into the village, and drew up in front of the Elder's cottage. The peasants, startled by such an unprecedented event, flocked thither and beheld their master, mistress, and all the pair's offspring, with the exception of the eldest, Vasíly, who had remained in Petersburg. From that memorable day forth, and to the very day of his death, Iván Andréevitch never quitted Lutchínovko. He built himself a house, this very house in which I now have the pleasure of chatting with you; he also built the church, and began to live the life of a landed proprietor. Iván Andréevitch was a man of huge stature, gaunt, taciturn, and extremely slow in all his movements; he never wore a dressing-gown, and no one, with the exception of his valet, had ever seen him with unpowdered hair. Iván Andréevitch habitually walked with his hands clasped behind his back, slowly turning his head at every step. Every day he walked in the long linden alley,

which he had planted with his own hands,—and before his death he had the satisfaction of enjoying the shade of those lindens.

Iván Andréevitch was extremely parsimonious of his words; this remarkable circumstance may serve as a proof of his taciturnity—that in the space of twenty years he never said a single word to his spouse, Anna Pávlovna. Altogether, his relations to Anna Pávlovna were of a very strange nature.—She administered all the domestic affairs, at dinner she always sat by her husband's side,—he would ruthlessly have chastised any man who presumed to utter one disrespectful word to her,—and yet he himself never spoke to her, and never touched her hand. Anna Pávlovna was a pale, timid, crushed woman; every day she prayed in church on her knees,[1] and never smiled. It was said that formerly, that is to say, before their arrival in the country, they had lived in grand style; it was said, also, that Anna Pávlovna had broken her marital vows, that her husband had found out about her fault. . . . However that may have been, Iván Andréevitch, even when he lay dying, did

[1] Except during Lent, and for special prayers on Christmas Day, New Year's Day and Pentecost (Trinity Sunday), hardly any kneeling is prescribed by the rubrics of the Eastern Catholic Church. During Easter-tide and on all Sundays it is forbidden by the rubrics, on the ground that joy in the resurrection should overpower the sense of sin and contrition. These rules are not always regarded. But a person who kneels much is conspicuous, and spectators assume that the posture indicates great grief or contrition—as above.—Translator.

not become reconciled to her. She never left him during his last illness; but he seemed not to notice her. One night, Anna Pávlovna was sitting in Iván Andréevitch's bedroom; he was tortured with insomnia; the shrine-lamp was burning in front of the holy picture; my great-grandfather's servant, Yúditch, concerning whom I shall have a couple of words to say to you hereafter, had left the room. Anna Pávlovna rose, crossed the chamber, and flung herself, sobbing, on her knees before her husband's bed, tried to say something—and stretched out her arms. . . . Iván Andréevitch looked at her—and shouted in a weak but firm voice: "Man!" The servant entered. Anna Pávlovna hastily rose to her feet, and returned, reeling, to her place.

Iván Andréevitch's children were extremely afraid of him. They grew up in the country, and were witnesses of Iván Andréevitch's strange behaviour to his wife. They all passionately loved Anna Pávlovna, but dared not express their love. She herself seemed to shun them. . . . You remember my grandfather, gentlemen: to the day of his death, he always used to go about on tiptoe, and he spoke in a whisper . . . . that 's what habit will do! My grandfather and his brother Iván Ivánovitch were plain, kind, peaceable and melancholy people; my *grand'tante* Natálya married a coarse, stupid man, as you know, and until her death cherished for him a

dumb, servile, sheep-like love; but their brother Vasíly was not like that.

I think I have told you that Iván Andréevitch left him in Petersburg. He was twenty years old at the time. His father confided him to the care of a distant relative, a man no longer young, a bachelor and a frightful Voltairian.

Vasíly grew up, and entered the service. He was small of stature, but well built and extremely agile; he spoke French splendidly, and was renowned for his skill at fighting with the broadsword. He was considered one of the most brilliant young men of the beginning of Katherine II's reign. My father often told me that he knew more than one old woman who could not mention Vasíly Ivánovitch Lutchínoff without heartfelt emotion. Picture to yourself a man gifted with remarkable strength of will, passionate and calculating, patient and daring, secretive to the last degree and—according to the words of all his contemporaries—bewitchingly, enchantingly amiable. He had neither conscience nor goodnature nor honour, although no one could call him a positively bad man. He was selfish—but knew how to conceal his selfishness, and was passionately fond of independence. When Vasíly Ivánovitch used, smilingly, to screw up his black eyes, when he wanted to fascinate any one, they say that it was impossible to resist him—and even people who were convinced of the coldness

and hardness of his spirit more than once surrendered to the bewitching power of his influence. He zealously served himself, and made others toil also for his benefit, and always succeeded in everything, because he never lost his head, did not disdain flattery as a means, and understood how to flatter.

Ten years after Iván Andréevitch settled in the country, he came to Lutchínovko as a brilliant officer of the Guards, for four months,—and in that space of time succeeded in turning the head even of the surly old man, his father. It is strange! Iván Andréevitch listened with delight to his son's tales of his conquests. His brothers were dumb in his presence, and admired him as a superior being. And even Anna Pávlovna herself came to love him almost more than all her other children, who were so sincerely devoted to her.

Vasíly Ivánovitch came to the country, in the first place, in order to see his relatives; but, in the second place also, in order to get as much money as possible out of his father. He had lived sumptuously and kept open house in Petersburg, and had contracted a multitude of debts. It was not easy for him to reconcile himself to his parent's stinginess, and, although Iván Andréevitch gave him for his trip alone more money, in all probability, than he gave all his other children in the space of the twenty years which they

spent in the paternal house, yet Vasíly stuck to the familiar Russian rule: "Take all you can get!"

Iván Andréevitch had a servant, Yúditch by name, as tall, gaunt, and taciturn a man as his master. They say that this Yúditch was, in part, the cause of the strange behaviour of Iván Andréevitch to Anna Pávlovna: they say that it was he who discovered the guilty liaison of my great-grandmother with one of my great-grandfather's best friends. Probably Yúditch deeply repented of his ill-judged zeal, because it would be difficult to conceive of a more kind-hearted man. His memory is held sacred to this day by all my house-serfs. Yúditch enjoyed the unbounded confidence of my great-grandfather. At that period, landed proprietors had money, but did not hand it over to loan institutions for safe-keeping, but kept it themselves in coffers, in cellars, and the like. Iván Andréevitch kept all his money in a huge iron-bound coffer, which stood under the head of his bed. The key to this coffer was handed over to Yúditch. Every evening, when he went to bed, Iván Andréevitch ordered this chest to be opened in his presence, tapped all the tightly-stuffed sacks in turn with his cane, and on Saturdays, he and Yúditch untied the sacks and carefully counted over the money.

Vasíly found out about all these performances

and was fired with a desire to rummage a bit in the sacred coffer. In the course of five or six days he *mollified* Yúditch, that is to say, he reduced the poor old fellow to such a state that—as the saying is—he fairly worshipped his young master. After having properly prepared him, Vasíly assumed a careworn and gloomy aspect, for a long time refused to answer Yúditch's inquiries and, at last, told him that he had gambled away all his money, and intended to lay violent hands on himself if he did not obtain money from somewhere. Yúditch began to sob, flung himself on his knees before him, begged him to remember God, not to ruin his soul. Vasíly, without uttering a word, locked himself up in his chamber. After a while, he heard some one knocking cautiously on his door. He opened the door and beheld on the threshold Yúditch, pale and trembling, with a key in his hands. Vasíly immediately understood everything. At first he resisted for a long time. Yúditch kept repeating with tears: "Pray, master, take it!" . . . At last, Vasíly consented. This happened on Monday. The idea occurred to Vasíly to replace the money he abstracted with bits of glass. He reckoned on Iván Andréevitch's not paying any special heed to the barely perceptible difference in the sound when he tapped the sacks with his cane,—and by Saturday he hoped to obtain money and replace it in the sacks. No sooner

thought than done. His father, in fact, did not notice anything. But Vasíly did not obtain money by Saturday: he had hoped, with the money he had taken, to clean out at the card-table a certain wealthy neighbour—and, on the contrary, he lost everything himself. In the meantime, Saturday arrived; the turn came for the sacks stuffed with bits of glass. Picture to yourselves, gentlemen, the amazement of Iván Andréevitch!

"What 's the meaning of this?"—he thundered.

Yúditch made no reply.

"Hast thou stolen this money?"

"No, sir."

"Then has some one taken the key from thee?"

"I have not given the key to any one."

"Not to any one? If thou hast not given it to any one—thou art the thief. Confess!"

"I am not a thief, Iván Andréevitch."

"Whence came these bits of glass, damn it? So thou art deceiving me? For the last time I say to thee—confess!"

Yúditch hung his head and clasped his hands behind his back.

"Hey there, people!" shouted Iván Andréevitch in a raging voice.—"The rods!"

"What? You mean to . . . . whip . . . me?" whispered Yúditch.

"Thou shalt catch it! And how art thou any

better than the rest? Thou art a thief! Well, now, Yúditch! I had not expected such rascality from thee!"

"I have grown grey in your service, Iván Andréevitch," said Yúditch with an effort.

"And what care I about thy grey hair? May the devil take thee and thy service!"

The people entered.

"Take him, and give him a good flogging!"

Iván Andréevitch's lips were pale and trembling. He ramped about the room like a wild beast in a confined cage.

The men did not dare to execute his commands.

"What are you standing there for, you vile serfs? have I got to lay hands on him myself, I 'd like to know?"

Yúditch started for the door.

"Stop!" yelled Iván Andréevitch.—"Yúditch, for the last time I say to thee, I entreat thee, Yúditch, confess."

"I cannot," moaned Yúditch.

"Then seize him, the old sycophant! . . . Flog him to death! On my head be it!" thundered the maddened old man. The torture began. . . .

Suddenly the door flew open, and Vasíly entered. He was almost paler than his father, his hands trembled, his upper lip was raised and disclosed a row of white, even teeth.

"I am guilty," he said in a dull but steady voice.—"I took the money."

The men stopped short.

"Thou! what? ! thou, Váska! without the consent of Yúditch?"

"No!"—said Yúditch:—"with my consent. I myself gave the key to Vasíly Ivánovitch. Dear little father, Vasíly Ivánovitch! why have you deigned to trouble yourself?"

"So that 's who the thief is!"—shouted Iván Andréevitch.—"Thanks, Vasíly, thanks! But I shall not spare thee, Yúditch, all the same. Why didst not thou confess all to me at once? Hey, there, you! why have you stopped? or do you no longer recognise my authority? And I 'll settle with you, my dear little dove!" he added, turning to Vasíly.

The men were on the point of setting to work again on Yúditch.

"Don't touch him!" whispered Vasíly through his teeth. The servants did not heed him. —"Back!" he shouted, and hurled himself upon them. . . . They staggered back.

"Ah! a rebel!"—moaned Iván Andréevitch, and raising his cane, he advanced on his son.

Vasíly leaped aside, grasped the hilt of his sword, and bared it half-way. All began to tremble. Anna Pávlovna, attracted by the noise, frightened and pale, made her appearance in the doorway.

Iván Andréevitch's face underwent a frightful change. He staggered, dropped his cane, and fell heavily into an arm-chair, covering his face with both hands. No one stirred; all stood as though rooted to the spot, not excepting even Vasíly. He convulsively gripped the steel hilt of his sword, his eyes flashed with a morose, evil gleam. . . .

"Go away all . . . begone,"—said Iván Andréevitch in a low voice, without removing his hands from his face.

The whole throng withdrew. Vasíly halted on the threshold, then suddenly tossed his head, embraced Yúditch, kissed his mother's hand . . . and two hours later he was no longer in the village. He had departed for Petersburg.

On the evening of that day, Yúditch was sitting on the porch of the house-serfs' cottage. The servants swarmed around him, pitied him, and bitterly blamed the master.

"Stop, my lads," he said to them at last;—"enough of that . . . . why do you abuse him? I don't believe that he, our dear little father, is pleased himself with his desperate deed. . . ."

As a result of this affair, Vasíly never saw his parents again. Iván Andréevitch died without him, probably with such grief at his heart as may God spare any of us from experiencing. In the meantime, Vasíly Ivánovitch went out in society, made merry after his own fashion, and squan-

dered money. How he obtained the money, I cannot say with certainty. He procured for himself a French servant, a clever and intelligent young fellow, a certain Boursier. This man became passionately attached to him, and aided him in all his numerous performances. I have no intention of narrating to you in detail all the pranks of my great-uncle; he distinguished himself by such unbounded audacity, such snaky tact, such incredible cold-bloodedness, such adroit and subtle wit, that, I must confess, I can understand the limitless power of that unprincipled man over the most noble souls. . . .

Soon after his father's death, Vasíly Ivánovitch, notwithstanding all his tact, was challenged to a duel by an outraged husband. He fought, severely wounded his antagonist, and was forced to quit the capital: he was ordered to reside permanently on his hereditary estate. Vasíly Ivánovitch was thirty years of age. You can easily imagine, gentlemen, with what feelings this man, who had become accustomed to the brilliant life of the capital, journeyed to his native place. They say that, on the road, he frequently got out of his kibítka, flung himself face down on the snow, and wept. No one in Lutchínovko recognised the former jolly, amiable Vasíly Ivánovitch. He spoke to no one, he went off hunting from morning until night, with visible impatience endured the timid caresses of his

mother, and jeered pitilessly at his brothers, and at their wives (both of them were already married). . . .

So far I have said nothing to you, I believe, about Olga Ivánovna. She had been brought to Lutchínovko as an infant at the breast; she had almost died on the way. Olga Ivánovna had been reared, as the saying is, in the fear of God and of her parents. . . . It must be confessed that Iván Andréevitch and Anna Pávlovna both treated her like a daughter. But there was concealed in her a feeble spark of that fire which blazed so brightly in the soul of Vasíly Ivánovitch. In the meantime, while Iván Andréevitch's own children did not dare to indulge in conjectures concerning the strange, speechless quarrel between their parents, Olga, from her earliest years had been disturbed and pained by the position of Anna Pávlovna. Like Vasíly, she loved independence; all oppression revolted her. She had attached herself to her benefactress with all the powers of her soul; she hated old Lutchínoff, and more than once, as she sat at table, she had fixed upon him such sombre glances, that even the man who was serving the viands felt frightened. Iván Andréevitch did not notice all those glances, because, in general, he paid no attention whatever to his family.

At first, Anna Pávlovna endeavoured to exterminate this hatred in her—but several bold

questions on Olga's part forced her to complete silence. Iván Andréevitch's children adored Olga, and the old woman loved her also, although with rather a cold affection.

Prolonged sorrow had crushed all cheerfulness, all strong feeling, in this poor woman; nothing so clearly proves Vasíly's bewitching amiability as the fact that he made even his mother love him ardently. Effusions of tenderness on the part of children was not in the spirit of that age, and therefore it is not surprising that Olga did not venture to display her devotion, although she always kissed Anna Pávlovna's hand with particular respect in the evening, when she bade her good-night. She was barely able to read and write. Twenty years later, Russian girls began to read novels in the style of the "Adventures of Marquis G***,"—"Fanfan and Lolotte,"—of "Alexyéi; or, The Cot in the Forest";—they began to learn to play on the clavichord and to sing romances in the style of the following, once very familiar song:

> "Men in the light
> Cling to us like flies"—and so forth.

But in the '70s (Olga Ivánovna was born in the year 1757), our rustic beauties had no conception of all these accomplishments. It would be difficult for us now to picture to ourselves a

young Russian girl of good birth of that epoch. We can, it is true, judge from our grandmothers as to the degree of education of noble gentlewomen in the times of Katherine II; but how is one to distinguish that which was inculcated in them in the course of their long life, from that which they were in the days of their youth?

Olga Ivánovna spoke a little French, but with a strong Russian accent; in her day, there was no thought of such a thing as the *emigrés.*[1] In a word, with all her good qualities, she was, nevertheless, a decided *savage,* and, probably, in the simplicity of her heart, she more than once administered chastisement with her own hands to some unlucky maid. . . .

Some time before Vasíly Ivánovitch's arrival, Olga Ivánovna had been betrothed to a neighbour,—Pável Afanásievitch Rogatchyóff, an extremely good-natured and honourable man. Nature had forgotten to endow him with gall. His own servants did not obey him; they sometimes all went off, from the first to the last of them, and left poor Rogatchyóff without any dinner . . . but nothing could disturb the tranquillity of his soul. He had been distinguished, even from his childhood, by his obesity and sluggishness; he had never served anywhere, and he was

[1] Many exiles caused by the French Revolution found refuge in Russia as tutors. Some founded families there, intermarrying with Russians, and their Russified names are easily recognisable.—TRANSLATOR.

fond of going to church and singing in the choir. Look at that good-natured, round face, gentlemen; gaze at that tranquil, brilliant smile . . . . does not it make you feel cheerful yourselves? Once in a while his father had driven over to Lutchínovko, and had brought with him, on festival days, his Pávlusha, whom the little Lutchínoffs tormented in every possible way. Pávlusha grew up, began to go to Iván Andréevitch's of his own accord, fell in love with Olga Ivánovna, and offered her his hand and his heart—not to her personally, but to her benefactors. Her benefactors gave their consent. They never even thought of asking Olga Ivánovna whether she liked Rogatchyóff. At that epoch,—as our grandmothers used to say,—" such luxuries were not in fashion." But Olga speedily got used to her betrothed: it was impossible not to grow attached to that gentle, indulgent being.

Rogatchyóff had received no education whatsoever; all he could say in French was " bonzhour "—and in secret he even regarded that word as improper. And some jester had also taught him the following, which professed to be a French song: " Sónetchka, Sónetchka! Que voulez-vous de moi—I adore you—mais je ne peux pas." . . . He was always humming this song in an undertone when he felt in good spirits. His father also was a man of indescribably kind disposition; he was forever going about in a long

nankeen coat, and no matter what was said to him, he assented to everything with a smile.

From the time of Pável Afanásievitch's betrothal both the Rogatchyóffs—father and son—began to bustle about frightfully; they made over their house, they built on various "galleries," they chatted in friendly wise with the workmen, they treated them to vodka. They did not manage to finish all the additional building by winter—so they deferred the wedding until the summer; in the summer, Iván Andréevitch died—and the wedding was postponed until the following spring; in the winter, Vasíly Ivánovitch arrived. Rogatchyóff was introduced to him; Vasíly received him coldly and carelessly, and in the course of time, frightened him to such a degree by his arrogant treatment that poor Rogatchyóff quivered like a leaf at his mere appearance, maintained silence, and smiled constrainedly. Vasíly once came near driving him off for good—by offering to bet with him that he, Rogatchyóff, was unable to stop smiling. Poor Pável Afanásievitch almost wept with confusion, but—'t is an actual fact!—the smile, the very stupid, constrained smile, would not quit his face! And Vasíly slowly toyed with the ends of his neckcloth, and stared at him in quite too scornful a manner.

Pável Afanásievitch's father also learned of Vasíly's arrival, and a few days later—for the sake of "the greater solemnity"—he set out for

Lutchínovko with the intention of "congratulating the amiable visitor on his arrival in his native parts." Afanásy Afanásievitch was renowned throughout the whole countryside for his eloquence—that is to say, for his ability to utter, without hesitation, a rather long and cunningly-concocted speech, with a slight admixture of bookish words. Alas! on this occasion he did not maintain his reputation; he became confused much worse than his son, Pável Afanásievitch. He stammered out something very unintelligible, and, although he had never touched vodka in his life, having this time, "by way of countenance," drunk a small glassful (he had found Vasíly at luncheon), he had endeavoured, at least, to clear his throat with a certain amount of independence, and had not produced the smallest sound. As he set out for home, Pável Afanásievitch whispered to his parent: "Well, dear little father?" Afanásy Lúkitch replied to him with irritation, also in a whisper: "Don't mention it!"

The Rogatchyóffs began to come more rarely to Lutchínovko. But they were not the only ones whom Vasíly intimidated: he aroused in his brothers, in their wives, even in Anna Pávlovna herself, a painful and involuntary sense of discomfort . . . . they began to avoid him in all possible ways. Vasíly could not help noticing this, but, apparently, he had no intention of altering his behaviour to them, when, all of a sud-

den, at the beginning of the spring, he again revealed himself as the same amiable, charming man they had previously known him to be. . . .

The first revelation of this sudden change was on the occasion of Vasíly's unexpected call on the Rogatchyóffs. Afanásy Lúkitch, in particular, was thoroughly daunted by the sight of Lutchínoff's calash, but his fear very speedily vanished. Never had Vasíly been more amiable and merry. He linked his arm in the arm of young Rogatchyóff, walked out with him to inspect the buildings, chatted with the carpenters, gave them advice, himself made a few notches with the axe, ordered them to show him Afanásy Lúkitch's stud-horses, himself drove them at the end of a rope—and altogether, by his cordial amiability, reduced the kind-hearted steppe-dwellers to such a condition that they both repeatedly embraced him. At home, also, Vasíly turned all heads for a few days as of yore: he devised various amusing games, he procured musicians, invited in the neighbours of both sexes, narrated the tittle-tattle of the town to the old ladies in the most diverting manner, paid some court to the young women, invented unheard-of amusements, fireworks, and so forth:—in a word, he enlivened everything and everybody. The sad, gloomy house of the Lutchínoffs was suddenly converted into a noisy, brilliant, enchanting sort of dwelling, of which the whole countryside talked.—This sudden change

amazed many, delighted all, and various rumours got into circulation; the knowing ones said that some hidden trouble had, up to that time, been afflicting Vasíly Ivánovitch, that the possibility of returning to the capital had presented itself to him. . . . But no one divined the true cause of Vasíly Ivánovitch's regeneration.

Olga Ivánovna, gentlemen, was very far from being uncomely.—But her beauty consisted rather in remarkable softness and freshness of person, in a tranquil charm of movement, than in strict regularity of features. Nature had endowed her with a certain independence; her education—she had been reared an orphan—had developed in her caution and firmness. Olga did not belong to the category of quiet and languid young gentlewomen; but one feeling alone had fully ripened in her: hatred for her benefactor. However, other and more womanly passions also could flame up in Olga Ivánovna's soul with unusual, unhealthy force . . . . but there was in her none of that proud coldness, nor that compact strength of soul, nor that selfish concentration, without which every passion speedily vanishes.—The first outbursts of such half-active, half-passive souls are sometimes remarkably violent; but they very soon undergo a change, especially when it becomes a question of the ruthless application of accepted principles; they fear the consequences. . . . And, yet, gentlemen, I must con-

fess to you frankly: women of that sort produce upon me a very strong impression. . . .

(At these words, the narrator tossed off a glass of water at one draught.—"Nonsense! nonsense!"—I thought, as I looked at his round chin: —"on you, my dear friend, no one in the world produces 'a very strong impression.'") . . .

Piótr Feódorovitch went on:

Gentlemen, I believe in blood, in race. There was more blood in Olga Ivánovna, than, for example, in her nominal sister—Natálya. How did that "blood" show itself?—you ask me.—Why, in everything; in the outline of her hands and of her lips, in the sound of her voice, in her glance, in her walk, in the way she dressed her hair,—in the folds of her gown, in short. In all these trifles there was a certain hidden something, although I must admit that that . . . . how shall I express it? . . . . that distinction which had fallen to the lot of Olga Ivánovna would not have attracted the attention of Vasíly if he had met her in Petersburg. But in the country, in the wilds, she not only excited his attention,—but even, altogether, was the sole cause of the change of which I have just spoken.

Judge for yourselves: Vasíly Ivánovitch was fond of enjoying life; he could not help being bored in the country; his brothers were kind-hearted fellows, but extremely limited in mind;

he had nothing in common with them. His sister Natálya and her husband had had four children in the space of three years; between her and Vasíly lay a whole abyss. . . Anna Pávlovna went to church, prayed, fasted, and prepared herself for death. There remained only Olga, a rosy, timid, charming young girl. . . At first Vasíly did not notice her . . . and who would turn his attention on an adopted child, an orphan, a foundling? . . . . One day, at the very beginning of spring, he was walking through the garden, and with his cane switching off the heads of the chicory, those stupid yellow flowers which make their appearance in such abundance first of all, in the meadows as yet hardly green.—He was strolling in the garden in front of the house, raised his head—and beheld Olga Ivánovna.—She was sitting with her side to the window, and gazing pensively at a striped kitten, which, purring and blinking, had cuddled down on her lap, and with great satisfaction was presenting its little nose to the spring sunshine, already fairly brilliant. Olga Ivánovna wore a white morning-gown with short sleeves; her bare, faintly-rosy, as yet not fully-developed shoulders and arms breathed forth freshness and health; a small cap discreetly confined her thick, soft, silky locks; her face was slightly flushed; she had not been long awake. Her slender, supple neck was bent forward so charmingly; her unconfined form re-

posed so engagingly and modestly that Vasíly Ivánovitch (a great connoisseur!) involuntarily halted and took a look. It suddenly came into his head that Olga Ivánovna ought not to be left in her pristine ignorance, that in time she might turn out to be a very charming and very amiable woman. He crept up to the window, raised himself on tiptoe, and imprinted a silent kiss on Olga Ivánovna's smooth, white arm, a little below the elbow.—Olga screamed and sprang to her feet, the kitten elevated its tail, and leaped into the garden; Vasíly Ivánovitch detained her with his hand. . . . Olga blushed all over, to her very ears; he began to jest at her fright . . . . invited her to walk with him; but suddenly Olga Ivánovna noticed the negligence of her attire—"more swiftly than the swift-footed doe," she slipped into the next room.

That same day, Vasíly set off for the Rogatchyóff's'. He suddenly grew gay, and brightened up in spirit. Vasíly did not fall in love with Olga, no!—one must not trifle with the word love. . . . He had found for himself an occupation, he had set himself a task, and was rejoicing with the joy of an active man. He never even called to mind the fact that she was his mother's adopted child, the betrothed of another man; he did not deceive himself for a single instant; he was very well aware that she could not be his wife. . . . Perhaps passion was his excuse—not a lofty, not a noble pas-

sion, 't is true, but, nevertheless, a tolerably strong and torturing passion. Of course he did not fall in love like a child; he did not surrender himself to unbounded raptures; he knew well what he wanted and what he was aiming at.

Vasíly Ivánovitch possessed to perfection the ability to win the favour of others, even of those who were prejudiced or timid. Olga speedily ceased to shun him. Vasíly Ivánovitch introduced her into a new world. He imported a clavichord for her, gave her music lessons (he played very fairly himself on the flute), he read books to her, he had long talks with her. . . . The poor young steppe-girl's head was turned; Vasíly had completely subjugated her. He knew how to talk to her about that which, hitherto, had been foreign to her, and to talk in a language which she understood. Olga gradually brought herself to express all her feelings to him; he helped her, suggested to her the words which she could not find; he did not startle her; he now repressed, now encouraged her impulses. . . . Vasíly occupied himself with her education not out of a disinterested desire to awaken and develop her abilities; he simply wanted to bring her somewhat closer to him, and he knew, moreover, that it is easier to attract an inexperienced, shy, but vain young girl by the mind than by the heart. Even if Olga had been a remarkable being, Vasíly could not possibly have observed it, because he treated

her like a child; but you already know, gentlemen, that there was nothing noteworthy about Olga.

Vasíly strove, as much as possible, to work on her imagination, and often of an evening she would leave him with such a whirl of new images, words, and thoughts in her head, that she was unable to get to sleep until dawn, and sighing sadly, she pressed her burning cheeks against her cold pillows; or she rose and went to the window, and gazed timorously and eagerly into the far-away gloom. Vasíly filled every moment of her life; she could not think of any one else. She soon ceased to take any notice of Rogatchyóff. Vasíly, being a shrewd and clever man, did not speak to Olga in his presence; but he either confused him to the verge of tears, or got up some boisterous game, a stroll in the evening, a rowing-party on the river by night with lanterns and music,—in a word, he did not give Pável Afanásievitch a chance to recover his ground. But, despite all Vasíly Ivánovitch's cleverness, Rogatchyóff was dimly conscious that he, the betrothed and the future husband of Olga, had become, as it were, a stranger to her . . . . but, in his infinite good-heartedness, he was afraid of wounding her by a reproach, although he really loved her and prized her affection. When he was alone with her, he did not know what to talk about, and merely endeavoured to serve her in every possible way. Two months passed. Every

trace of independence, of will, disappeared in Olga; the weak and taciturn Rogatchyóff could not serve her as a prop; she did not even try to resist the fascination, and with a sinking heart she gave herself unconditionally to Vasíly. . . .

Olga Ivánovna, it is probable, then learned the joys of love; but not for long. Although Vasíly —for the lack of any other occupation—not only did not discard her, but even became attached to her, and petted her, yet Olga lost herself to such a degree that she did not find bliss even in love, and nevertheless she was unable to tear herself away from Vasíly. She began to be afraid of everything, she did not dare to think; she talked of nothing; she ceased to read; she became a prey to melancholy. Sometimes Vasíly succeeded in drawing her after him, and making her forget everybody and everything; but on the following day he found her pale and silent, with cold hands, with a senseless smile on her lips. . . .

A decidedly difficult time began for Vasíly; but no difficulties could daunt him. He concentrated himself completely, like an expert gambler. He could not count upon Olga Ivánovna in the slightest degree; she was incessantly betraying herself, paling, and blushing and weeping . . . her new rôle was beyond her strength. Vasíly toiled for two; in his boisterous and noisy joy only an experienced observer could have detected a feverish tenseness; he played with his

brothers, his sisters, the Rogatchyóffs, the neighbours, both men and women,—as though they had been pawns; he was eternally on the alert, he never allowed a single glance, a single movement to escape him, although he appeared to be the most care-free of mortals; every morning he entered into battle, and every evening he celebrated a victory. He was not in the least oppressed by this strange activity; he slept four hours a day, he ate very little, and was healthy, fresh, and gay. In the meantime, the wedding-day was approaching; Vasíly succeeded in convincing Pável Afanásievitch himself of the necessity of a postponement; then he despatched him to Moscow to make some purchases, and himself entered into correspondence with his Petersburg friends. He exerted himself not so much out of compassion for Olga Ivánovna, as out of a desire and love for fuss and bustle. . . . Moreover, he had begun to grow tired of Olga Ivánovna, and more than once already, after a fierce outburst of passion, he had looked at her as he had been wont to look at Rogatchyóff. Lutchínoff always remained a puzzle to every one; in the very coldness of his implacable spirit you felt conscious of the presence of a strange, almost southern flame, and in the maddest heat of passion, cold emanated from that man.—In the presence of others, he upheld Olga Ivánovna as before; but when he was alone with her, he played with her

as a cat plays with a mouse—he either terrified her with sophisms, or he exhibited heavy and vicious tedium, or, in conclusion, he threw himself at her feet again, swept her away, as a whirlwind sweeps a chip . . . . and he was not then pretending to be in love . . . but really was swooning with it himself. . .

One day, quite late in the evening, Vasíly was sitting alone in his own room and attentively perusing the latest letters he had received from Petersburg—when, suddenly, the door creaked softly and Paláshka, Olga Ivánovna's maid, entered.

"What dost thou want?"—Vasíly asked her, quite curtly.

"My mistress begs that you will come to her."

"I can't at present. Go away. . . Well, why dost thou stand there?"—he went on, perceiving that Paláshka did not leave the room.

"My mistress ordered me to say that there is very great need, sir."

"Well, but what 's the matter?"

"Please to see for yourself, sir. . . ."

Vasíly rose, with vexation tossed the letters into a casket, and betook himself to Olga Ivánovna. She was sitting alone in a corner,—pale and motionless.

"What do you want?"—he asked her, not very politely.

Olga looked at him, and with a shudder, covered her eyes.

" What ails you? what 's the matter with thee, Olga? "

He took her hand. . . Olga Ivánovna's hand was as cold as ice. . . She tried to speak . . . . and her voice died away. The poor woman had no doubt left in her mind as to her condition.

Vasíly was somewhat disconcerted. Olga Ivánovna's room was a couple of paces from the bedroom of Anna Pávlovna. Vasíly cautiously seated himself beside Olga, kissed and warmed her hands, and argued with her in a whisper. She listened to him, and shivered silently, slightly. Paláshka stood in the doorway and softly wiped away her tears. In the adjoining room a pendulum was beating heavily and regularly, and the breathing of a sleeper was audible. Olga Ivánovna's torpor dissolved, at last, in tears and dull sobs. Tears are the equivalent of a thunderstorm: after them a person is always quieter. When Olga Ivánovna had become somewhat composed, and only sobbed convulsively from time to time like a child, Vasíly knelt down before her, and with caresses and tender promises soothed her completely, gave her a drink of water, put her to bed, and went away. All night long he did not undress himself, wrote two or three letters, burned two or three papers, got out a golden locket with the portrait of a black-browed and

black-eyed woman, with a bold, sensual face, gazed long at her features, and paced his chamber in thought. On the following morning, at tea, he beheld, with a good deal of dissatisfaction, poor Olga's reddened, swollen eyes, and pale, distraught face. After breakfast, he proposed to her that she should take a stroll with him in the park. Olga followed Vasíly like an obedient sheep. But when, two hours later, she returned from the park, she looked dreadfully; she told Anna Pávlovna that she felt ill, and went to bed. During the walk, Vasíly had announced to her, with all due penitence, that he was secretly married—he was just as much a bachelor as I am. Olga Ivánovna did not fall down in a swoon —people fall in swoons only on the stage; but she became suddenly petrified, although she not only had not been hoping to marry Vasíly Ivánovitch, but had even, somehow, been afraid to think of it. Vasíly began to demonstrate to her the necessity of parting from him and marrying Rogatchyóff. Olga Ivánovna looked at him with dumb horror. Vasíly talked coldly, practically, sensibly; he blamed himself, he expressed regret,—but all his arguments wound up with the following words: " We must act." Olga lost her head completely; she was frightened and ashamed; dismal, heavy despair took possession of her; she longed for death—and sadly awaited Vasíly's decision.

"We must confess all to my mother," he said at last.

Olga turned deadly pale; her limbs gave way beneath her.

"Don't be frightened, don't be frightened," —Vasíly kept repeating:—"rely on me; I will not forsake thee . . . I will arrange everything . . . trust in me."

The poor woman gazed at him with love . . . yes, with love, and with profound, though hopeless devotion.

"I will arrange everything, everything,"— said Vasíly to her at parting . . . and for the last time kissed her ice-cold hands.

Olga Ivánovna had just risen from her bed on the following morning, when her door opened . . . and Anna Pávlovna made her appearance on the threshold. She was supported by Vasíly. Silently she made her way to an arm-chair, and silently seated herself. Vasíly stood beside her. He seemed composed; his brows were contracted, and his lips were slightly parted. Anna Pávlovna, pale, indignant, wrathful, tried to speak, but her voice failed her. Olga Ivánovna with terror, took in, in a single glance, her benefactress and her lover; she felt a frightful sinking at the heart . . . with a shriek she fell down on her knees in the middle of the room and covered her face with her hands. . . .

"So it is true . . . it is true?" whispered

Anna Pávlovna, and bent toward her. . . . "Answer!"—she went on harshly, seizing Olga by the arm.

"Mamma!" rang out Vasíly's brazen voice,—"you promised me not to insult her."

"I won't . . . come, confess . . . . confess . . . is it true? Is it true?"

"Mamma . . . remember! . . ." said Vasíly, slowly.

That one word shook Anna Pávlovna violently. She leaned against the back of her chair, and fell to sobbing.

Olga Ivánovna softly raised her head and attempted to fling herself at the old woman's feet, but Vasíly restrained her, raised her up, and seated her in another arm-chair. Anna Pávlovna continued to weep and whisper incoherent words. . . .

"Listen, mamma,"—began Vasíly. "Don't be so overwhelmed! This calamity can still be alleviated. . . . If Rogatchyóff . . . ."

Olga Ivánovna shuddered and straightened herself up.

"If Rogatchyóff,"—pursued Vasíly, with a significant glance at Olga Ivánovna,—"has imagined that he can with impunity disgrace an honourable family . . . ."

Olga Ivánovna was terrified.

"In my house,"—moaned Anna Pávlovna.

"Calm yourself, mamma. He has taken ad-

vantage of her inexperience, of her youth, he . . . . did you wish to say something?"—he added, perceiving that Olga was trying to get at him.

Olga Ivánovna fell back in her chair.

"I shall go at once to Rogatchyóff. I shall force him to wed her this very day. Be assured, I shall not permit him to jeer at us. . . ."

"But . . . Vasíly Ivánovitch . . . you . . ." whispered Olga.

He stared long and coldly at her. She relapsed into silence.

"Mamma, give me your word not to disturb her until my arrival. See—she is barely alive. Yes, and you require rest yourself. Trust to me: I answer for everything; in any case, await my return. I repeat to you—do not kill her, nor yourself—rely upon me."

He walked to the door, and paused.

"Mamma,"—he said: "come with me. Leave her alone, I beg of you."

Anna Pávlovna rose, went to the holy picture, made a reverence to the floor, and softly followed her son. Olga Ivánovna followed her silently and immovably with her eyes. Vasíly hastily came back, seized her hand, whispered in her ear: "Trust to me, and do not betray us,"—and immediately withdrew. . . .

"Boursier!" he shouted, as he ran swiftly down the stairs.—"Boursier!"

A quarter of an hour later he was seated in his calash with his servant.

Old Rogatchyóff was not at home that day. He had gone to the county town, to buy seersucker for kaftans to clothe his retainers. Pável Afanásievitch was sitting in his study, and inspecting a collection of faded butterflies. Elevating his eyebrows, and thrusting forth his lips, he was cautiously turning about with a pin the large wings of the "nocturnal sphinx," when suddenly, he felt a small but heavy hand on his shoulder. He glanced round—before him stood Vasíly.

"Good morning, Vasíly Ivánovitch,"—said he, not without some surprise.

Vasíly looked at him and sat down in front of him on a chair.

Pável Afanásievitch was about to smile . . . but glanced at Vasíly, relaxed, opened his mouth, and clasped his hands.

"Come, tell me, Pável Afanásievitch,"—began Vasíly, suddenly:—"do you intend to have the wedding soon?"

"I? . . . soon . . . . of course. . . . I, so far as I am concerned . . . . however, that is as you and your sister choose. . . . I, for my part, am ready to-morrow, if you like."

"Very good, very good. You are a very impatient man, Pável Afanásievitch."

"How so, sir?"

"Listen,"—added Vasíly Ivánovitch, rising to his feet:—"I know everything; you understand me, and I order you to marry Olga without delay, to-morrow."

"But excuse me, excuse me,"—returned Rogatchyóff, without rising from his seat;—"you order me? I myself have sought the hand of Olga Ivánovna, and there is no need to order me. I must confess, Vasíly Ivánovitch, somehow, I don't understand you. . . ."

"Thou dost not understand?"

"No, really, I don't understand, sir."

"Wilt thou give me thy word to marry her to-morrow?"

"Why, good gracious, Vasíly Ivánovitch . . . . have n't you yourself repeatedly postponed our marriage? If it had not been for you, it would have taken place long ago. And even now I have no idea of refusing. But what is the meaning of your threats, of your urgent demands?"

Pável Afanásievitch wiped the perspiration from his face.

"Wilt thou give me thy word? Speak! Yes, or no?"—repeated Vasíly with pauses between his words.

"Certainly . . . I give it, sir, but . . . ."

"Good. Remember. . . . And she has confessed everything."

"Who has confessed?"

"Olga Ivánovna."

"But what has she confessed?"

"Why do you dissimulate with me, Pável Afanásievitch? Surely, I 'm not a stranger to you."

"How am I dissimulating? I don't understand you, I don't understand you, positively I don't understand you. What could Olga Ivánovna confess?"

"What? You bore me! You know well what."

"May God slay me if . . . ."

"No, I will slay thee—if thou dost not marry her . . . . dost understand?"

"What! . . . ." Pável Afanásievitch leaped to his feet, and stood before Vasíly.—"Olga Ivánovna . . . . you say . . . ."

"Thou 'rt clever, my good fellow, very clever, I must admit." Vasíly, with a smile, tapped him on the shoulder.—"In spite of the fact that thou art so mild of aspect . . . ."

"My God, O God! . . . You will drive me mad. . . What do you mean to say? Explain yourself, for God's sake!"

Vasíly bent over him and whispered something in his ear.

Rogatchyóff cried out:—"What? . . . . how?"

Vasíly stamped his foot.

"Olga Ivánovna? Olga? . . ."

"Yes . . . . your betrothed bride. . . ."

"My betrothed bride . . . . Vasíly Ivánovitch . . . . she . . . . she . . . . But I will have no-

thing to do with her!"—shouted Pável Afanásievitch. "I 'll have none of her! What do you take me for? To deceive me—to deceive me! . . . Olga Ivánovna, is n't it sinful of you, are n't you ashamed? . . . ." (Tears gushed from his eyes.)—"I thank you, Vasíly Ivánovitch, I thank you. . . . And now I 'll have nothing to do with her! I won't! I won't! don't speak of such a thing! . . . . Akh, good heavens!—that I should have lived to see this day! But it is well, it is well!"

"Stop behaving like a baby,"—remarked Vasíly Ivánovitch, coldly.—"Remember, you have given me your word that the wedding shall take place to-morrow."

"No, that shall not be! Enough, Vasíly Ivánovitch, I say to you once more—for whom do you take me? You do me much honour; many thanks, sir. Excuse me, sir."

"As you like!"—retorted Vasíly.—"Get your sword."

"Why?"

"This is why."

Vasíly drew out his slender, flexible French sword, and bent it slightly against the floor.

"You mean . . . . to fight . . . . with me? . . ."

"Precisely so."

"But, Vasíly Ivánovitch, pray, enter into my position! How can I—judge for yourself—after what you have told me? . . . I am

an honest man, Vasíly Ivánovitch; I am a nobleman."

"You are a nobleman, you are an honest man,—then be so good as to fight with me."

"Vasíly Ivánovitch!"

"You appear to be a coward, Mr. Rogatchyóff?"

"I am not in the least a coward, Vasíly Ivánovitch. You have thought to frighten me, Vasíly Ivánovitch. 'Come, now,' you said to yourself, 'I 'll scare him, and he 'll turn cowardly; he will instantly consent to anything.' . . . . No, Vasíly Ivánovitch, I 'm the same sort of nobleman as yourself, although I have not received my education in the capital, it is true; and you will not succeed in terrifying me, excuse me."

"Very good,"—retorted Vasíly:—"where is your sword?"

"Eróshka!"—shouted Pável Afanásievitch.

A man entered.

"Get my sword—yonder—thou knowest where it is—in the garret . . . . and be quick about it. . . ."

Eróshka withdrew. Pável Afanásievitch suddenly turned extremely pale, hastily took off his dressing-gown, put on a kaftan of a reddish hue with large strass buttons . . . . wound a neckcloth round his neck. . . . Vasíly watched him, and examined the fingers of his right hand.

"So how is it to be? Are we to fight, Pável Afanásievitch?"

"If we must fight, we must,"—returned Rogatchyóff, hastily buttoning his waistcoat.

"Hey, Pável Afanásievitch, heed my advice: marry . . . . why shouldst thou not? . . . But I, believe me . . . ."

"No, Vasíly Ivánovitch,"—Rogatchyóff interrupted him. "You will either kill me or maim me, I know; but I have no intention of losing my honour; if I must die, I will."

Eróshka entered and hurriedly handed Rogatchyóff a wretched little old sword, in a cracked, leather scabbard. At that time all nobles wore swords when they had powdered hair; but the nobles of the steppes only powdered their hair a couple of times a year. Eróshka retreated to the door, and fell to weeping. Pável Afanásievitch thrust him out of the room.

"But, Vasíly Ivánovitch,"—he remarked, with some agitation,—"I cannot fight with you instantly: permit me to defer our duel until tomorrow; my father is not at home; and it would not be a bad thing to put my affairs in order, in case of a catastrophe."

"I see that you are beginning to quail again, my dear sir."

"No, no, Vasíly Ivánovitch; but judge for yourself. . . ."

"Listen!" . . . shouted Lutchínoff:—"you are driving me out of patience. . . . Either give me your word to marry immediately, or fight

. . . . or I will trounce you with a cudgel, like a coward, do you understand?"

"Let us go into the park,"—replied Rogatchyóff between his teeth.

But suddenly the door opened, and the old nurse Efímovna, all dishevelled, forced her way into the room, fell on her knees before Rogatchyóff and clasped his feet. . . .

"My dear little father!"—she wailed:—"my child . . . . what is this thou art projecting? Do not ruin us miserable ones, dear little father! For he will kill thee, my dear little dove! But only give us the command, give us the command, and we 'll kill that insolent fellow with our caps. . . . Pável Afanásievitch, my darling child, have the fear of God before thine eyes!"

A multitude of pale and agitated faces showed themselves in the doorway . . . . the red beard of the Elder even made its appearance. . . .

"Let me go, Efímovna, let me go!"—muttered Rogatchyóff.

"I will not let thee go, my own one, I will not let thee go. What art thou doing, dear little father, what art thou doing? And what will Afanásy Lúkitch say? Why, he will drive all of us out of the white world. . . . And why do ye stand there? Seize the unbidden guest by the arms, and lead him forth from the house, that no trace of him may remain. . . ."

"Rogatchyóff!"—shouted Vasíly Ivánovitch, menacingly.

"Thou hast gone crazy, Efímovna, thou art disgracing me," . . . . said Pável Afanásievitch. —"Go away, go, with God's blessing, and begone, all of you, do you hear? Do you hear? . . ."

Vasíly Ivánovitch walked swiftly to the open window, drew out a small silver whistle, and whistled lightly. . . . Boursier answered close at hand. Lutchínoff immediately turned to Pável Afanásievitch.

"How is this comedy to end?"

"Vasíly Ivánovitch, I will come to you tomorrow—what am I to do with this crazy woman? . . . ."

"Eh! I see that it is useless to talk long with you,"—said Vasíly, and swiftly raised his cane. . . .

Pável Afanásievitch dashed forward, thrust aside Efímovna, seized his sword, and rushed through the other door into the park.

Vasíly darted after him. They both ran to a wooden arbour artfully painted in the Chinese manner, locked themselves in, and bared their swords. Rogatchyóff had once upon a time taken lessons in fencing; but he barely knew how to parry properly. The blades crossed. Vasíly was, evidently, playing with Rogatchyóff's sword. Pável Afanásievitch sighed, turned pale, and gazed with consternation into Lutchínoff's face. In the

meanwhile, cries resounded in the park; a throng of people rushed to the arbour. Suddenly Rogatchyóff heard a heart-rending, senile roar .... he recognised his father's voice. Afanásy Lúkitch, hatless, and with dishevelled locks, was running in front of all, waving his arms despairingly. . . . .

With a powerful and unexpected turn of his blade, Vasíly knocked the sword from Pável Afanásievitch's hand.

"Marry, brother,"—he said to him.—"Stop being a fool!"

"I will not marry!"—whispered Rogatchyóff, closed his eyes, and trembled all over.

Afanásy Lúkitch began to pound on the door of the arbour.

"Thou wilt not?"—shouted Vasíly.

Rogatchyóff shook his head in the negative.

"Well, then, the devil take thee!"

Poor Pável Afanásievitch fell dead: Lutchínoff's sword had pierced his heart. . . . The door burst open, old Rogatchyóff rushed into the arbour, but Vasíly had already managed to spring out of the window. . .

Two hours later, he entered Olga Ivánovna's room. . . She darted to meet him in affright. . . . He silently bowed to her, drew out his sword, and pierced Pável Afanásievitch's portrait at the place of the heart. Olga shrieked, and fell senseless on the floor. . . . Vasíly directed his

steps to Anna Pávlovna. He found her in the room of the holy pictures.

" Mamma,"—he said,—" we are avenged."

The poor old woman shuddered and went on praying.

A week later, Vasíly took his departure for Petersburg,—and two years afterward he returned to the country, crippled with paralysis, and speechless. He no longer found either Anna Pávlovna or Olga Ivánovna alive, and soon died himself in the arms of Yúditch, who fed him like a baby, and was the only person who could understand his incoherent babble.

THREE MEETINGS

(1851)

THREE MEETINGS

I

Passa que' colli e vieni allegramente;
Non ti curar di tanta compania—
Vieni pensando a me segretamente—
Ch'io t' accompagna per tutta la via.[1]

DURING the whole course of the summer, I had gone a-hunting nowhere so frequently as to the large village of Glínnoe, situated twenty versts from my hamlet. In the environs of this village there are, in all probability, the very best haunts of game in all our county. After having tramped through all the adjacent bush-plots and fields, I invariably, toward the end of the day, turned aside into the neighbouring marsh, almost the only one in the countryside, and thence returned to my cordial host, the Elder of Glínnoe, with whom I always stopped. It is not more than two versts from the marsh to Glínnoe; the entire road runs through a valley, and only midway of the distance is one compelled to cross a small hillock. On the crest of this hillock lies a homestead, consisting of one uninhabited little

[1] Pass through these hills and come cheerily to me: care thou not for too great a company. Come thou, and think secretly of me, that I may be thy comrade all the way.

manor-house and a garden. It almost always happened that I passed it at the very acme of the sunset glow, and I remember, that on every such occasion, this house, with its hermetically-sealed windows, appeared to me like a blind old man who had come forth to warm himself in the sunlight. He is sitting, dear man, close to the highway; the splendour of the sunlight has long since been superseded for him by eternal gloom; but he feels it, at least, on his upturned and outstretched face, on his flushed cheeks. It seemed as though no one had lived in the house itself for a long time; but in a tiny detached wing, in the courtyard, lodged a decrepit man who had received his freedom, tall, stooping, and grey-haired, with expressive and impassive features. He was always sitting on a bench in front of the wing's solitary little window, gazing with sad pensiveness into the distance, and when he caught sight of me, he rose a little way and saluted, with that deliberate gravity which distinguishes old house-serfs who have belonged not to the generation of our fathers, but to our grandfathers. I sometimes entered into conversation with him, but he was not loquacious; all I learned from him was that the farm on which he dwelt belonged to the granddaughter of his old master, a widow, who had a younger sister; that both of them lived in towns, and beyond the sea, and never showed themselves at home; that he was

anxious to finish his life as speedily as possible, because "you eat and eat bread so that you get melancholy: so long do you eat." This old man's name was Lukyánitch.

One day, for some reason or other, I tarried long in the fields; a very fair amount of game had presented itself, and the day had turned out fine for hunting—from early morning it had been still and grey, as though thoroughly permeated with evening. I wandered far a-field, and it was not only already completely dark, but the moon had risen and night had long been standing in the sky, as the expression runs, when I reached the familiar farm. I had to pass along the garden. . . All around lay such tranquillity. . .

I crossed the broad road, cautiously made my way through the dusty nettles, and leaned against the low, wattled hedge.[1] Motionless before me lay the small garden all illuminated and, as it were, soothed to stillness by the silvery rays of the moon,—all fragrant and humid; laid out in ancient fashion, it consisted of a single oblong grass-plot. Straight paths came together exactly in the centre, in a circular flower-bed, thickly overgrown with asters; tall lindens surrounded it in an even border. In one spot only was this border, a couple of fathoms in length, broken, and through the gap a part of the low-

[1] In central and southern Russia where timber is scarce, fences, and even the walls of barns and store-houses, are made of interlaced boughs. —TRANSLATOR.

roofed house was visible, with two windows lighted, to my amazement. Young apple-trees reared themselves here and there over the meadow; athwart their slender branches the nocturnal sky gleamed softly blue, and the dreamy light of the moon streamed down; in front of each apple-tree, on the whitening grass, lay its faint, mottled shadow. On one side of the garden the lindens were confusedly green, inundated with motionless, palely-brilliant light; on the other, they stood all black and opaque; a strange, repressed rustling arose at times in their dense foliage; they seemed to be calling to the paths which vanished under them, as though luring them beneath their dim canopy. The whole sky was studded with stars; mysteriously did their soft blue scintillations stream down from on high; they seemed to be gazing with quiet intentness at the distant earth. Small, thin clouds now and then sailed across the moon, momentarily converting its tranquil gleam into an obscure but luminous mist. . . . Everything was dreaming. The air, all warm, all perfumed, did not even vibrate; it only shivered now and then, as water shivers when disturbed by a falling branch. . . . One was conscious of a certain thirst, a certain swooning in it. . . I bent over the fence: a wild scarlet poppy reared its erect little stalk before me from the matted grass; a large, round drop of night dew glittered with a dark gleam in the

heart of the open blossom. Everything was dreaming; everything was taking its ease luxuriously round about; everything seemed to be gazing upward, stretching itself out, motionless, expectant. . . What was it that that warm, not yet sleeping night, was waiting for?

It was waiting for a sound; that sensitive stillness was waiting for a living voice—but everything maintained silence. The nightingales had long since ceased their song . . . and the sudden booming of a beetle as it flew past, the light smacking of a tiny fish in the fish-pond behind the lindens at the end of the garden, the sleepy whistle of a startled bird, a distant cry in the fields,—so far away that the ear could not distinguish whether it was a man, or a wild animal, or a bird which had uttered it,—a short, brisk trampling of hoofs on the road: all these faint sounds, these rustlings, only rendered the stillness more profound. . . My heart yearned within me, with an indefinite feeling, akin not precisely to expectation, nor yet to a memory of happiness. I dared not stir; I was standing motionless before this motionless garden steeped in moonlight and in dew, and, without myself knowing why, was staring importunately at those two windows, which shone dimly red in the soft half-darkness, when suddenly a chord rang out of the house,—rang out and rolled forth in a flood. . . . The irritatingly-resonant air thun-

dered back an echo. . . . I gave an involuntary start.

The chord was followed by the sound of a woman's voice. . . I began to listen eagerly—and . . . can I express my amazement? . . . two years previously, in Italy, at Sorrento, I had heard that selfsame song, that selfsame voice. . . . Yes, yes. . .

"Vieni pensando a me segretamente . . ."

It was they; I had recognised them; those were the sounds. . . This is the way it had happened. I was returning home from a long stroll on the seashore. I was walking swiftly along the street; night had long since descended,—a magnificent night, southern, not calm and sadly-pensive as with us, no! but all radiant, sumptuous, and very beautiful, like a happy woman in her bloom; the moon shone with incredible brilliancy; great, radiant stars fairly throbbed in the dark-blue sky; the black shadows were sharply defined against the ground illuminated to yellowness. On both sides of the street stretched the stone walls of gardens; orange-trees reared above them their crooked branches; the golden globes of heavy fruit, hidden amidst the interlacing leaves, were now barely visible, now glowed brightly, as they ostentatiously displayed themselves in the moonlight. On many trees the blossoms shone tenderly white; the air was all impregnated with fragrance

languishingly powerful, penetrating, and almost heavy, although inexpressibly sweet.

I walked on, and, I must confess,—having already become accustomed to all these wonders,—I was thinking only of how I might most speedily reach my inn, when suddenly, from a small pavilion, built upon the very wall of a garden along which I was passing, a woman's voice rang out. It was singing some song with which I was unfamiliar, and in its sounds there was something so winning, it seemed so permeated with the passion and joyous expectation expressed by the words of the song, that I instantly and involuntarily halted, and raised my head. There were two windows in the pavilion; but in both the Venetian blinds were lowered, and through their narrow chinks a dull light barely made its way.

After having repeated "*vieni, vieni!*" twice, the voice became silent; the faint sound of strings was audible, as though of a guitar which had fallen on the rug; a gown rustled, the floor creaked softly. The streaks of light in one window disappeared. . . Some one had approached from within and leaned against it. I advanced a couple of paces. Suddenly the blind clattered and flew open; a graceful woman, all in white, swiftly thrust her lovely head from the window, and stretching out her arms toward me, said: "*Sei tu?*"

I was disconcerted, I did not know what to say;

but at that same moment the Unknown threw herself backward with a faint shriek, the blind slammed to, and the light in the pavilion grew still more dim, as though it had been carried out into another room. I remained motionless, and for a long time could not recover myself. The face of the woman who had so suddenly presented itself before me was strikingly beautiful. It had flashed too rapidly before my eyes to permit of my immediately recalling each individual feature; but the general impression was indescribably powerful and profound. . . . I felt then and there that I should never forget that countenance. The moon fell straight on the wall of the pavilion, on the window whence she had shown herself to me, and, great heavens! how magnificently had her great, dark eyes shone in its radiance! In what a heavy flood had her half-loosened black hair fallen upon her uplifted, rounded shoulders! How much bashful tenderness there had been in the soft inclination of her form, how much affection in her voice, when she had called to me—in that hurried, but resonant whisper!

After standing for quite a long time on one spot, I at last stepped a little aside, into the shadow of the opposite wall, and began to stare thence at the pavilion with a sort of stupid surprise and anticipation. I listened . . . . listened with strained attention. . . It seemed to me now

that I heard some one's quiet breathing behind the darkened window, now a rustle and quiet laughter. At last, steps resounded in the distance . . . they came nearer; a man of almost identical stature with myself made his appearance at the end of the street, briskly strode up to a gate directly beneath the pavilion, which I had not previously noticed, knocked twice with its iron ring, without looking about him, waited a little, knocked again, and began to sing in an undertone: *"Ecco ridente."* . . . The gate opened . . . he slipped noiselessly through it. I started, shook my head, threw my hands apart, and pulling my hat morosely down on my brows, went off home in displeasure. On the following day I vainly paced up and down that street for two hours in the very hottest part of the day, past the pavilion, and that same evening went away from Sorrento without even having visited Tasso's house.

The reader can now picture to himself the amazement which suddenly took possession of me, when I heard that same voice, that same song, in the steppes, in one of the most remote parts of Russia. . . . Now, as then, it was night; now, as then, the voice suddenly rang out from a lighted, unfamiliar room; now, as then, I was alone. My heart began to beat violently within me. "Is not this a dream?" I thought. And lo! again the final *"vieni!"* rang out. . . . Can it

be that the window will open? Can it be that the woman will show herself in it?—The window opened. In the window, a woman showed herself. I instantly recognised her, although a distance of fifty paces lay between us, although a light cloud obscured the moon. It was she, my Unknown of Sorrento.

But she did not stretch forth her bare arms as before: she folded them quietly, and leaning them on the window-sill, began to gaze silently and immovably at some point in the garden. Yes, it was she; those were her never-to-be-forgotten features, her eyes, the like of which I had never beheld. Now, also, an ample white gown enfolded her limbs. She seemed somewhat plumper than in Sorrento. Everything about exhaled an atmosphere of the confidence and repose of love, the triumph of beauty, of calm happiness. For a long time she did not stir, then she cast a glance backward into the room and, suddenly straightening herself up, exclaimed thrice, in a loud and ringing voice: "*Addio!*" The beautiful sounds were wafted far, far away, and for a long time they quivered, growing fainter and dying out beneath the lindens of the garden and in the fields behind me, and everywhere. Everything around me was filled for several minutes with the voice of this woman, everything rang in response to her,—rang with her. She shut the window, and a few moments later the light in the house vanished.

As soon as I recovered myself—and this was not very soon, I must admit—I immediately directed my course along the garden of the manor, approached the closed gate, and peered through the wattled fence. Nothing out of the ordinary was visible in the courtyard; in one corner, under a shed, stood a calash. Its front half, all bespattered with dried mud, shone out sharply white in the moonlight. The shutters of the house were closed, as before.

I have forgotten to say, that for about a week previous to that day, I had not visited Glínnoe. For more than half an hour I paced to and fro in perplexity in front of the fence, so that, at last, I attracted the attention of the old watch-dog, which, nevertheless, did not begin to bark at me, but merely looked at me from under the gate in a remarkably ironical manner, with his purblind little eyes puckered up. I understood his hint, and beat a retreat. But before I had managed to traverse half a verst, I suddenly heard the sound of a horse's hoofs behind me. . . . In a few minutes a rider, mounted on a black horse, dashed past me at a swift trot, and swiftly turning toward me his face, where I could descry nothing save an aquiline nose and a very handsome moustache under his military cap, which was pulled well down on his brow, turned into the right-hand road, and immediately vanished behind the forest.

" So that is he," I thought to myself, and my

heart stirred within me in a strange sort of way. It seemed to me that I recognised him; his figure really did suggest the figure of the man whom I had seen enter the garden-gate in Sorrento. Half an hour later I was in Glínnoe at my host's, had roused him, and had immediately begun to interrogate him as to the persons who had arrived at the neighbouring farm. He replied with an effort that the ladies had arrived.

"But what ladies?"

"Why, everybody knows what ladies," he replied very languidly.

"Russians?"

"What else should they be?—Russians, of course."

"Not foreigners?"

"Hey?"

"Have they been here long?"

"Not long, of course."

"And have they come to stay long?"

"That I don't know."

"Are they wealthy?"

"And that, too, we don't know. Perhaps they are wealthy."

"Did not a gentleman come with them?"

"A gentleman?"

"Yes, a gentleman."

The Elder sighed.

"O, okh, O Lord!"—he ejaculated with a yawn. . . . "N-n-o, there was no . . . . gentle-

man, I think there was no gentleman. I don't know!"—he suddenly added.

"And what sort of other neighbours are living here?"

"What sort? everybody knows what sort,—all sorts."

"All sorts?—And what are their names?"

"Whose—the lady proprietors'? or the neighbours'?"

"The lady proprietors'."

Again the Elder yawned.

"What are their names?"—he muttered.—"Why, God knows what their names are! The elder, I think, is named Anna Feódorovna, and the other . . . No, I don't know that one's name."

"Well, what 's their surname, at least?"

"Their surname?"

"Yes, their surname, their family name."

"Their family name. . . . Yes. Why, as God is my witness, I don't know."

"Are they young?"

"Well, no. They are not."

"How old are they, then?"

"Why, the youngest must be over forty."

"Thou art inventing the whole of this."

The Elder was silent for a while.

"Well, you must know best. But I don't know."

"Well, thou art wound up to say one thing!"—I exclaimed with vexation.

Knowing, by experience, that there is no possibility of extracting anything lucid from a Russian man when once he undertakes to answer in that way (and, moreover, my host had only just thrown himself down to sleep, and swayed forward slightly before every answer, opening his eyes widely with child-like surprise, and with difficulty ungluing his lips, smeared with the honey of the first, sweet slumber),—I gave up in despair, and declining supper, went into the barn.

I could not get to sleep for a long time. "Who is she?"—I kept incessantly asking myself:—"a Russian? If a Russian, why does she speak in Italian? . . . . The Elder declares that she is not young. . . . But he 's lying. . . . And who is that happy man? . . Positively, I can comprehend nothing. . . But what a strange adventure! Is it possible that thus, twice in succession . . . . . But I will infallibly find out who she is, and why she has come hither." . . . Agitated by such disordered, fragmentary thoughts as these, I fell asleep late, and saw strange visions. . . . Now it seems to me that I am wandering in some desert, in the very blaze of noonday—and suddenly, I behold in front of me, a huge spot of shadow running over the red-hot yellow sand. . . I raise my head—'t is she, my beauty, whisking through the air, all white, with long white wings, and beckoning me to her. I dart after her; but she floats on lightly

and swiftly, and I cannot rise from the ground, and stretch out eager hands in vain. . . . "*Addio!*" she says to me, as she flies away.—"Why hast thou not wings? . . *Addio!*" . . . . And lo, from all sides, "*Addio!*" resounds. Every grain of sand shouts and squeaks at me: "*Addio!*" . . . then rings out in an intolerable, piercing trill. . . I brush it aside, as I would a gnat, I seek her with my eyes . . . and already she has become a cloud, and is floating upward softly toward the sun; the sun quivers, rocks, laughs, stretches out to meet her long golden threads, and now those threads have enmeshed her, and she melts into them, but I shout at the top of my lungs, like a madman: "That is not the sun, that is not the sun, that is an Italian spider. Who gave it a passport for Russia? I 'll show him up for what he is: I saw him stealing oranges from other people's gardens." . . . Then it seems to me that I am walking along a narrow mountain path. . . I hurry onward: I must get somewhere or other as quickly as possible, some unheard-of happiness is awaiting me. Suddenly a vast cliff rears itself up in front of me. I seek a passage; I go to the right, I go to the left—there is no passage! And now behind the cliff a voice suddenly rings out: "*Passa, passa quei colli.*" . . . It is calling me, that voice; it repeats its mournful summons. I fling myself about in anguish, I seek even the smallest cleft.

. . . Alas! the cliff is perpendicular, there is granite everywhere. . . . *" Passa quei colli,"* wails the voice again. My heart aches, and I hurl my breast against the smooth stone; I scratch it with my nails, in my frenzy. . . . A dark passage suddenly opens before me. . . Swooning with joy, I dash forward. . . " Nonsense! " some one cries to me:—" thou shalt not pass through." . . I look: Lukyánitch is standing in front of me and threatening, and brandishing his arms. . . I hastily fumble in my pockets: I want to bribe him; but there is nothing in my pockets. . . .

" Lukyánitch,"—I say to him,—" let me pass; I will reward thee afterward."

" You are mistaken, signor," Lukyánitch replies to me, and his face assumes a strange expression:—" I am not a house-serf; recognise in me Don Quixote de La Mancha, the famous wandering knight; all my life long I have been seeking my Dulcinea—and I have not been able to find her, and I will not tolerate it, that you shall find yours."

" Passa quei colli " . . . . rings out again the almost sobbing voice.

" Stand aside, signor! "—I shout wrathfully, and am on the point of precipitating myself forward . . . but the knight's long spear wounds me in the very heart. . . I fall dead, . . I lie on my back. . . I cannot move . . . and lo, I see that she is coming with a lamp in her hand,

and elevating it with a fine gesture above her head, she peers about her in the gloom, and creeping cautiously up, bends over me. . .

"So this is he, that jester!" she says with a disdainful laugh.—"This is he who wanted to know who I am!" and the hot oil from her lamp drips straight upon my wounded heart. . .

"Psyche!"—I exclaim with an effort, and awake.

All night long I slept badly and was afoot before daybreak. Hastily dressing and arming myself, I wended my way straight to the manor. My impatience was so great that the dawn had only just begun to flush the sky when I reached the familiar gate. Round me the larks were singing, the daws were cawing on the birches; but in the house everything was still buried in death-like matutinal slumber. Even the dog was snoring behind the fence. With the anguish of expectation, exasperated almost to the point of wrath, I paced to and fro on the dewy grass, and kept casting incessant glances at the low-roofed and ill-favoured little house which contained within its walls that mysterious being. . . .

Suddenly the wicket-gate creaked faintly, opened, and Lukyánitch made his appearance on the threshold, in some sort of striped kazák coat. His bristling, long-drawn face seemed to me more surly than ever. Gazing at me not with-

out surprise, he was on the point of shutting the wicket again.

"My good fellow, my good fellow!"—I cried hastily.

"What do you want at such an early hour?"—he returned slowly and dully.

"Tell me, please, they say that your mistress has arrived?"

Lukyánitch made no reply for a while.

"She has arrived. . ."

"Alone?"

"With her sister."

"Were there not guests with you last night?"

"No."

And he drew the wicket toward him.

"Stay, stay, my dear fellow. . . . Do me a favour. . . ."

Lukyánitch coughed and shivered with cold.

"But what is it you want?"

"Tell me, please, how old is your mistress?"

Lukyánitch darted a suspicious glance at me.

"How old is the mistress? I don't know. She must be over forty."

"Over forty! And how old is her sister?"

"Why, she 's in the neighbourhood of forty."

"You don't say so! And is she good-looking?"

"Who, the sister?"

"Yes, the sister."

Lukyánitch grinned.

"I don't know; that 's as a person fancies. In my opinion, she is n't comely."

"How so?"

"Because—she 's very ill-favoured. A bit puny."

"You don't say so! And has no one except them come hither?"

"No one. Who should come?"

"But that cannot be! . . . I . . . ."

"Eh, master! there 's no end of talking with you, apparently,"—retorted the old man with vexation.—"Whew, how cold it is! Good-bye."

"Stay, stay . . . . here 's something for thee. . . ." And I held out to him a quarter of a ruble which I had prepared beforehand; but my hand came into contact with the swiftly banged wicket-gate. The silver coin fell to the ground, rolled away, and lay at my feet.

"Ah, thou old rascal!"—I thought—"Don Quixote de La Mancha! Evidently, thou hast received orders to hold thy tongue. . . . But wait, thou shalt not trick me." . . .

I promised myself that I would elucidate the matter, at any cost. For about half an hour I paced to and fro, without knowing what decision to adopt. At last I made up my mind first to inquire in the village, precisely who had arrived at the manor, and who she was, then to return, and, as the saying runs, not desist until the matter was cleared up.—And if the Unknown should

come out of the house, I would, at last, see her by daylight, near at hand, like a living woman, not like a vision.

It was about a verst to the village, and I immediately betook myself thither, stepping out lightly and alertly: a strange audacity was seething and sparkling in my blood; the invigorating freshness of the morning excited me after the uneasy night.—In the village I learned from two peasants, who were on their way to their work, everything which I could learn from them; namely: I learned that the manor, together with the village which I had entered, was called Mikhaílovskoe, that it belonged to the widow of a Major, Anna Feódorovna Shlýkoff; that she had with her her sister, an unmarried woman, Pelagéya Feódorovna Badáeff by name; that both of them were advanced in years, were wealthy, hardly ever lived at home, were always travelling about, kept no one in attendance on them except two female domestic serfs and a male cook; that Anna Feódorovna had recently returned from Moscow with no one but her sister. . . . This last circumstance greatly perturbed me: it was impossible to assume that the peasants also had been commanded to hold their peace about my Unknown. But it was utterly impossible to concede that Anna Feódorovna Shlýkoff, a widow of five-and-forty, and that young, charming woman, whom I had seen on the previous evening, were one and

the same person. Pelagéya Feódorovna, judging from the description, was not distinguished for her beauty either, and, in addition to that, at the mere thought that the woman whom I had seen at Sorrento could bear the name of Pelagéya, and still more of Badáeff, I shrugged my shoulders and laughed maliciously. And nevertheless, I had beheld her the night before in that house. . . . I had beheld her, beheld her with my own eyes, I reflected. Irritated, enraged, but still more inclined to stand by my intention, I would have liked to return at once to the manor . . . . but glanced at my watch; it was not yet six o'clock. I decided to wait a while. Every one was still asleep at the farm, in all probability . . . and to prowl about the house at such an hour would only serve to arouse unnecessary suspicion; and besides, in front of me stretched bushes, and beyond them an aspen wood was visible. . .

I must do myself the justice to say, that, notwithstanding the thoughts which were exciting me, the noble passion for the hunt had not yet grown wholly mute within me; "perchance," I thought,—"I shall hit upon a covey,—and that will serve to pass away the time." I entered the bushes. But, truth to tell, I walked in a very careless way, quite out of consonance with the rules of the art: I did not follow my dog constantly with my eyes, I did not snort over a thick bush, in the hope that a red-browed black

snipe would fly thence with a whirr and a crash, but kept incessantly looking at my watch, which never serves any purpose whatsoever. And, at last, it was going on nine.—"'T is time!" I exclaimed aloud, and was on the point of turning back to the manor, when suddenly a huge black woodcock actually did begin to flutter out of the thick grass a couple of paces from me. I fired at the magnificent bird, and wounded it under the wing; it almost fell to the ground, but recovered itself, started off, fluttering its wings swiftly and, diving toward the wood, tried to soar above the first aspens on the edge, but its strength failed, and it rolled headlong into the thicket. It would have been utterly unpardonable to abandon such a prize. I strode briskly after it, entered the forest, made a sign to Dianka, and a few moments later I heard a feeble clucking and flapping; it was the unlucky woodcock, struggling under the paws of my quick-scented hound. I picked it up, put it in my game-bag, glanced round, and—remained rooted to the spot, as it were. . . .

The forest which I had entered was very dense and wild, so that I had with difficulty made my way to the spot where the bird had fallen; but at a short distance from me wound a cart-road, and along this road were riding on horseback my beauty and the man who had overtaken me on the night before; I recognised him by his

moustache. They were riding softly, in silence, holding each other by the hand; their horses were barely putting one foot before the other, lazily swaying from side to side and handsomely stretching out their long necks. When I had recovered from my first alarm . . . precisely that, alarm: I can give no other appellation to the feeling which suddenly seized upon me. . . . I fairly bored into her with my eyes. How beautiful she was! how enchantingly her graceful form moved toward me amid the emerald green! Soft shadows, tender reflections glided over her —over her long grey habit, over her slender, slightly-bent neck, over her faintly-rosy face, over her glossy black hair, which escaped luxuriantly from under her low-crowned hat. But how shall I transmit that expression of utter, passionate bliss of a person passionate to the point of speechlessness, which breathed forth from her features? Her head seemed to be bending beneath the burden of it; moist, golden sparks glittered in her dark eyes, which were half-concealed by her eyelashes; they gazed nowhere, those happy eyes, and the slender brows drooped over them. An irresolute, child-like smile—the smile of profound happiness, strayed over her lips; it seemed as though excess of happiness had wearied and even broken her a little, as a flower in full bloom sometimes breaks its own stem. Both her hands lay powerless: one, in the hand of the man who

was riding by her side, the other on her horse's mane.

I succeeded in getting a good look at her —and at him also. . . . He was a handsome, stately man, with an un-Russian face. He was gazing at her boldly and merrily, and, so far as I was able to observe, was admiring her not without secret pride. He was admiring her, the villain, and was very well-satisfied with himself, and not sufficiently touched, not sufficiently moved,—precisely that, moved. . . And, as a matter of fact, what man does deserve such devotion, what soul, even the most beautiful, is worthy of furnishing another soul such happiness? I must say, that I was envious of him! . . . . In the meantime, they had both arrived on a level with me . . . my dog suddenly bounded out into the road and began to bark. My Unknown started, cast a swift glance around and, catching sight of me, dealt her steed a violent blow on the neck with her whip. The horse snorted, reared up on his hind legs, threw both his hoofs forward simultaneously, and dashed off at a gallop. . . . The man immediately gave the spur to his black horse, and when I emerged by the road into the border of the forest a few moments later, both of them were already galloping off into the golden distance, across the fields, rising smartly and regularly in their saddles . . . and were not galloping in the direction of the farm. . . .

I gazed. . . . They speedily disappeared behind a hillock, brilliantly illuminated for the last time by the sun against the dark line of the horizon. I stood, and stood, then returned with slow steps to the forest and sat down on the path, covering my eyes with my hand.—I have observed that after meeting strangers, all that is necessary is to close the eyes—and their features immediately start up before you; any one can verify my observation on the street. The more familiar the faces, the more difficult is it for them to present themselves, the more indefinite is their impression; you recall them, but you do not see them, ... and you can never possibly picture to yourself your own face. . . . The very minutest separate feature is known to you, but the entire image will not constitute itself. So then, I sat down, closed my eyes—and immediately beheld the Unknown and her companion, and their horses, and everything. . . . The man's smiling countenance stood before me with particular sharpness and distinctness. I began to stare intently at it . . . it became confused, and dissolved into a sort of crimson mist, and after it, her image also floated away and sank, and would not return.

"Well, never mind!"—I thought;—"at all events, I have seen them, seen them both clearly. . . . It remains for me now to find out their names." Endeavour to find out their names!

What ill-judged, petty curiosity! But I swear that it was not curiosity which had flamed up in me. In truth, it simply seemed to me impossible not to discover, eventually, who they were, after accident had so strangely and so persistently brought us together. Moreover, my former impatient perplexity no longer existed; it had been replaced by a certain confused, sorrowful feeling, of which I was somewhat ashamed. . . . I was jealous. . . .

I did not hasten back to the farm. I must confess that I had become ashamed to pry into the secrets of others. Moreover, the appearance of the fond pair by daylight, in the light of the sun, although it was unexpected and, I repeat, strange, had not exactly soothed, but chilled me. I no longer found anything supernatural, miraculous in this occurrence . . . . nothing resembling an impossible dream. . . .

I began to hunt again with greater assiduity than before; but still, there were no genuine raptures. I hit upon a covey, which engaged my attention for an hour and a half. . . The young partridges did not respond to my whistle for a long time,—probably because I did not whistle with sufficient "objectivity."—The sun had already risen quite high (my watch indicated twelve o'clock), when I directed my steps toward the manor. I walked without haste. Yonder, at last, the low-roofed little house peeped forth from its

hill. I approached . . . . and not without secret satisfaction beheld Lukyánitch. As of yore, he was sitting motionless on the bench in front of the wing. The gate was closed—also the shutters.

"Good morning, uncle!"—I shouted to him from afar.—"Hast thou come out to warm thyself?"

Lukyánitch turned his gaunt face toward me and silently doffed his cap.

I went up to him.

"Good morning, uncle, good morning,"—I repeated, wishing to encourage him.—"Why,"—I added, unexpectedly descrying my quarterruble on the ground,—"didst not thou see it?"

And I pointed out to him the silver circle, half peeping from beneath the short grass.

"Yes, I saw it."

"Then why didst thou not pick it up?"

"Because it was n't my money, so I did n't pick it up."

"What a fellow thou art, brother!"—I returned, not without embarrassment, and picking up the coin, I offered it to him again.—"Take it, take it, for tea."

"Much obliged,"—Lukyánitch answered me, with a composed smile.—"It is n't necessary; I 'll manage to pull through without it. Much obliged."

"But I am ready to give you still more, with pleasure!"—I replied in confusion.

"What for? Please don't disturb yourself—much obliged for your good-will, but we still have a crust of bread. And perhaps we sha'n't eat that up—that 's as it may happen."

And he rose, and put out his hand to the wicket-gate.

"Stay, stay, old man,"—I began, almost in desperation;—"how uncommunicative thou art to-day, really. . . . Tell me, at least, has your mistress risen yet?"

"She has."

"And . . . . is she at home?"

"No, she 's not at home."

"Has she gone off on a visit, pray?"

"No, sir; she has gone to Moscow."

"To Moscow! How is that? Why, she was here this morning!"

"She was."

"And she passed the night here?"

"She did."

"And she came hither recently?"

"Yes."

"What next, my good man?"

"Why, this: it must be about an hour since she deigned to start back to Moscow."

"To Moscow!"

I stared in petrification at Lukyánitch; I had not expected this, I admit.

Lukyánitch stared at me. . . . A crafty, senile smile distended his withered lips and almost beamed in his melancholy eyes.

"And did she go away with her sister?"—I said at last.

"Yes."

"So that now there is no one in the house?"

"No one. . . ."

"This old man is deceiving me,"—flashed through my head.—"'T is not without cause that he is grinning so craftily.—Listen, Lukyánitch,"—I said aloud;—"dost wish to do me one favour?"

"What is it you wish?"—he enunciated slowly, evidently beginning to feel annoyed by my questions.

"Thou sayest that there is no one in the house; canst thou show it to me? I should be very grateful to thee."

"That is, you want to inspect the rooms?"

"Yes, the rooms."

Lukyánitch remained silent for a space.

"Very well,"—he said at last.—"Pray, enter. . . ."

And bending down, he stepped across the threshold of the wicket-gate. I followed him. After traversing a tiny courtyard, we ascended the tottering steps of the porch. The old man gave the door a push; there was no lock on it: a cord with a knot stuck out through the key-hole. . . .

We entered the house. It consisted in all of five or six low-ceiled rooms, and, so far as I could make out in the faint light, which streamed sparsely through the rifts in the shutters, the furniture in these rooms was extremely plain and decrepit. In one of them (namely, in the one which opened on the garden) stood a small, antiquated piano. . . . I raised its warped lid and struck the keys: a shrill, hissing sound rang out and died feebly away, as though complaining of my audacity. It was impossible to discern from anything that people had recently left the house; it had a dead and stifling sort of smell—the odour of an uninhabited dwelling; here and there, indeed, a discarded paper gave one to understand, by its whiteness, that it had been dropped there recently. I picked up one such bit of paper; it proved to be a scrap of a letter; on one side in a dashing feminine handwriting were scrawled the words "*se taire?*" on the other I made out the word "*bonheur.*" . . . On a small round table near the window stood a nosegay of half-faded flowers in a glass, and a green, rumpled ribbon was lying there also . . . . I took that ribbon as a souvenir. —Lukyánitch opened a narrow door, pasted over with wall-paper.

"Here,"—said he, extending his hand:—"this here is the bedroom, and yonder, beyond it, is the room for the maids, and there are no other chambers. . . ."

We returned by way of the corridor.—"And what room is that yonder?"—I asked, pointing at a broad, white door with a lock.

"That?"—Lukyánitch answered me, in a dull voice.—"That 's nothing."

"How so?"

"Because. . . . 'T is a store-room. . ." And he started to go into the anteroom.

"A store-room? Cannot I look at it?" . . .

"What makes you want to do that, master, really?!"—replied Lukyánitch with displeasure. —"What is there for you to look at? Chests, old crockery . . . 't is a store-room, and nothing more. . . ."

"All the same, show it to me, please, old man," —I said, although I was inwardly ashamed of my indecent persistence.—"I should like, you see . . . . I should like to have just such a house myself at home, in my village . . . ."

I was ashamed: I could not complete the sentence I had begun.

Lukyánitch stood with his grey head bent on his breast, and stared at me askance in a strange sort of way.

"Show it,"—I said.

"Well, as you like,"—he replied at last, got the key, and reluctantly opened the door.

I glanced into the store-room. There really was nothing noteworthy about it. On the walls hung old portraits with gloomy, almost black

countenances, and vicious eyes. The floor was strewn with all sorts of rubbish.

"Well, have you seen all you want?"—asked Lukyánitch, gruffly.

"Yes; thanks!"—I hastily replied.

He slammed to the door. I went out into the anteroom, and from the anteroom into the courtyard.

Lukyánitch escorted me, muttering: "Goodbye, sir!" and went off to his own wing.

"But who was the lady visitor at your house last night?"—I called after him:—"I met her this morning in the grove."

I had hoped to daze him with my sudden question, to evoke a thoughtless answer. But the old man merely laughed dully, and slammed the door behind him when he went in.

I retraced my steps to Glínnoe. I felt awkward, like a boy who has been put to shame.

"No,"—I said to myself:—"evidently, I shall not obtain a solution to this puzzle. I 'll give it up! I will think no more of all this."

An hour later, I set out on my homeward drive, enraged and irritated.

A week elapsed. Try as I might to banish from me the memory of the Unknown, of her companion, of my meetings with them,—it kept constantly returning, and besieged me with all the importunate persistence of an after-dinner fly. . . . Lukyánitch, with his mysterious looks

and reserved speeches, with his coldly-mournful smile, also recurred incessantly to my memory. The house itself, when I thought of it,—that house itself gazed at me cunningly and stupidly through its half-closed shutters, and seemed to be jeering at me, as though it were saying to me: "And all the same thou shalt not find out anything!" At last I could endure it no longer, and one fine day I drove to Glínnoe, and from Glínnoe set out on foot . . . . whither? The reader can easily divine.

I must confess that, as I approached the mysterious manor, I felt a decidedly violent agitation. The exterior of the house had not undergone the slightest change: the same closed windows, the same melancholy and desolate aspect; only, on the bench, in front of the wing, instead of old Lukyánitch, sat some young house-serf or other, of twenty, in a long nankeen kaftan and a red shirt. He was sitting with his curly head resting on his palm, and dozing, swaying to and fro from time to time, and quivering.

"Good morning, brother!"—I said in a loud voice.

He immediately sprang to his feet and stared at me with widely-opened, panic-stricken eyes.

"Good morning, brother!"—I repeated:—"And where is the old man?"

"What old man?"—said the young fellow, slowly.

"Lukyánitch."

"Ah, Lukyánitch!"—He darted a glance aside.—"Do you want Lukyánitch?"

"Yes, I do. Is he at home?"

"N-no,"—enunciated the young fellow, brokenly,—"he, you know . . . how shall I . . . tell . . . you . . . about . . . . that . . . ."

"Is he ill?"

"No."

"What then?"

"Why, he is n't here at all."

"Why not?"

"Because. Something . . . . unpleasant . . . happened to him."

"Is he dead?"—I inquired with surprise.

"He strangled himself."

"Strangled himself!"—I exclaimed in affright, and clasped my hands.

We both gazed in each other's eyes in silence.

"How long ago?"—I said at last.

"Why, to-day is the fifth day since. They buried him yesterday."

"But why did he strangle himself?"

"The Lord knows. He was a freeman, on wages; he did not know want, the masters petted him as though he were a relation. For we have such good masters—may God give them health! I simply can't understand what came over him. Evidently, the Evil One entrapped him."

"But how did he do it?"

"Why, so. He took and strangled himself."

"And nothing of the sort had been previously noticed in him?"

"How shall I tell you. . . . There was nothing . . . . particular. He was always a very melancholy man. He used to groan, and groan. 'I 'm so bored,' he would say. Well, and then there was his age. Of late, he really did begin to meditate something. He used to come to us in the village; for I 'm his nephew.—'Well, Vásya, my lad,' he would say, 'prithee, brother, come and spend the night with me!'—'What for, uncle?'—'Why, because I 'm frightened, somehow; 't is tiresome alone.' Well, and so I 'd go to him. He would come out into the courtyard and stare and stare so at the house, and shake and shake his head, and how he would sigh! . . . Just before that night, that is to say, the one on which he put an end to his life, he came to us again, and invited me. Well, and so I went. When we reached his wing, he sat for a while on the bench; then he rose, and went out. I wait, and 'he 's rather long in coming back'—says I, and went out into the courtyard, and shouted, 'Uncle! hey, uncle!' My uncle did not call back. Thinks I: 'Whither can he have gone? surely, not into the house?' and I went into the house. Twilight was already drawing on. And as I was passing the store-room, I heard something scratching there, behind the door; so I took and

opened the door. Behold, there he sat doubled up under the window.

"'What art thou doing there, uncle?' says I. But he turns round, and how he shouts at me, and his eyes are so keen, so keen, they fairly blaze, like a cat's.

"'What dost thou want? Dost not see—I am shaving myself.' And his voice was so hoarse. My hair suddenly rose upright, and I don't know why I got frightened . . . evidently, about that time the devils had already assailed him.

"'What, in the dark?'—says I, and my knees fairly shook.

"'Come,' says he, 'it 's all right, begone!'

"I went, and he came out of the store-room and locked the door. So we went back to the wing, and the terror immediately left me.

"'What wast thou doing in the store-room, uncle?' says I.—He was fairly frightened.

"'Hold thy tongue!' says he; 'hold thy tongue!' and he crawled up on the oven-bench.

"'Well,' thinks I to myself,—'t will be better for me not to speak to him; he surely must be feeling ill to-day.' So I went and lay down on the oven-bench myself, too. And a night-light was burning in a corner. So, I am lying there, and just dozing, you know . . . when suddenly I hear the door creaking softly . . . and it opens —so, a little. And my uncle was lying with his back to the door, and, as you may remember,

he was always a little hard of hearing. But this time he sprang up suddenly. . .

" ' Who 's calling me, hey? who is it? hast come for me, for me? ! ' and out he ran into the yard without his hat. . . .

" I thought: ' What 's the matter with him? ' and, sinful man that I am, I fell asleep immediately. The next morning I woke up . . . . and Lukyánitch was not there.

" I went out of doors and began to call him—he was nowhere. I asked the watchman:

" ' Has n't my uncle come out? ' says I.

" 'No,' says he, ' I have n't seen him.' . . .

" ' Has n't something happened to him, brother? ' . . . . says I. . .

" ' Oï! ' . . . . We were both fairly frightened.

" ' Come, Feodósyeitch,' says I, ' come on,' says I,—' let 's see whether he is n't in the house.'

" ' Come on,'—says he, ' Vasíly Timofyéitch! ' but he himself was as white as clay.

" We entered the house. . . I was about to pass the store-room, but I glanced and the padlock was hanging open on the hasp, and I pushed the door, but the door was fastened inside. . . . Feodósyeitch immediately ran round, and peeped in at the window.

" ' Vasíly Timofyéitch! ' he cries;—' his legs are hanging, his legs . . . '

" I ran to the window. And they were his legs, Lukyánitch's legs. And he had hanged himself

in the middle of the room.—Well, we sent for the judge. . . . They took him down from the rope; the rope was tied with twelve knots."

"Well, what did the court say?"

"What did the court say? Nothing. They pondered and pondered what the cause might be. There was no cause. And so they decided that he must have been out of his mind. His head had been aching of late, he had been complaining very frequently of his head. . . ."

I chatted for about half an hour longer with the young fellow, and went away, at last, completely disconcerted. I must confess that I could not look at that rickety house without a secret, superstitious terror. . . . A month later I quitted my country-seat, and little by little all these horrors, these mysterious encounters, vanished from my mind.

II

Three years passed. The greater part of that time I spent in Petersburg and abroad; and even when I did run down to my place in the country, it was only for a few days at a time, so that I never chanced to be in Glínnoe or in Mikhaílovskoe on a single occasion. Nowhere had I seen my beauty nor the man. One day, toward the end of the third year, in Moscow, I chanced to meet Madame Shlýkoff and her sister, Pelagéya

Badáeff—that same Pelagéya whom I, sinful man that I am, had hitherto regarded as a mythical being—at an evening gathering in the house of one of my acquaintances. Neither of the ladies was any longer young, and both possessed pleasing exteriors; their conversation was characterised by wit and mirth: they had travelled a great deal, and travelled with profit; easy gaiety was observable in their manners. But they and my acquaintance had positively nothing in common. I was presented to them. Madame Shlýkoff and I dropped into conversation (her sister was being entertained by a passing geologist). I informed her that I had the pleasure of being her neighbour in *** county.

"Ah! I really do possess a small estate there," —she remarked,—"near Glínnoe."

"Exactly, exactly,"—I returned:—"I know your Mikhaílovskoe. Do you ever go thither?"

"I?—Rarely."

"Were you there three years ago?"

"Stay! I think I was. Yes, I was, that is true."

"With your sister, or alone?"

She darted a glance at me.

"With my sister. We spent about a week there. On business, you know. However, we saw no one."

"H'm. . . . I think there are very few neighbours there."

"Yes, very few. I 'm not fond of neighbours."

masquerades began. One day, as I emerged at eleven o'clock at night from the house of a friend, I felt myself in such a gloomy frame of mind that I decided to betake myself to the masquerade in the Assembly of the Nobility.[1] For a long time I roamed about among the columns and past the mirrors with a discreetly-fatalistic expression on my countenance—with that expression which, so far as I have observed, makes its appearance in such cases on the faces of the most well-bred persons—why, the Lord only knows. For a long time I roamed about, now and then parrying with a jest the advances of divers shrill dominoes with suspicious lace and soiled gloves, and still more rarely addressing them. For a long time I surrendered my ears to the blare of the trumpets and the whining of the violins; at last, being pretty well bored, I was on the point of going home . . . . and . . . . and remained. I caught sight of a woman in a black domino, leaning against a column,—and no sooner had I caught sight of her than I stopped short, stepped up to her, and . . . will the reader believe me? . . . . immediately recognised in her my Unknown. How I recognised her: whether by the glance which she abstractedly cast upon me through the oblong aperture in her mask, or by the wonderful outlines of her shoulders and arms, or by the peculiarly feminine stateliness of her whole form, or, in conclu-

[1] The Nobles' Club.—Translator.

sion, by some secret voice which suddenly spoke in me,—I cannot say . . . . only, recognise her I did. With a quiver in my heart, I walked past her several times. She did not stir; in her attitude there was something so hopelessly sorrowful that, as I gazed at her, I involuntarily recalled two lines of a Spanish romance:

Soy un cuadro de tristeza,
Arrimado a la pared.[1]

I stepped behind the column against which she was leaning, and bending my head down to her very ear, enunciated softly:

"*Passa quei colli.*" . . .

She began to tremble all over, and turned swiftly round to me. Our eyes met at very short range, and I was able to observe how fright had dilated her pupils. Feebly extending one hand in perplexity, she gazed at me.

"On May 6, 184*, in Sorrento, at ten o'clock in the evening, in della Croce Street,"—I said in a deliberate voice, without taking my eyes from her; "afterward, in Russia, in the *** Government, in the hamlet of Mikhaílovskoe, on June 22, 184*." . . . .

I said all this in French. She recoiled a little, scanned me from head to foot with a look of

[1] "I am a picture of sorrow,
Leaning against the wall."

amazement, and whispering, "*Venez,*" swiftly left the room. I followed her.

We walked on in silence. It is beyond my power to express what I felt as I walked side by side with her. It was as though a very beautiful dream had suddenly become reality . . . as though the statue of Galatea had descended as a living woman from its pedestal in the sight of the swooning Pygmalion. . . . I could not believe it, I could hardly breathe.

We traversed several rooms. . . . At last, in one of them, she paused in front of a small divan near the window, and seated herself. I sat down beside her.

She slowly turned her head toward me, and looked intently at me.

"Do you . . . . do you come from *him?*" she said.

Her voice was weak and unsteady. . .

Her question somewhat disconcerted me.

"No . . . . not from him,"—I replied haltingly.

"Do you know him?"

"Yes,"—I replied, with mysterious solemnity. I wanted to keep up my rôle.—"Yes, I know him."

She looked distrustfully at me, started to say something, and dropped her eyes.

"You were waiting for him in Sorrento,"—I went on;—"you met him at Mikhaílovskoe, you rode on horseback with him. . . ."

"How could you . . . ." she began.

"I know . . . I know all. . . ."

"Your face seems familiar to me, somehow,"—she continued:—"but no . . . ."

"No, I am a stranger to you."

"Then what is it that you want?"

"I know that also,"—I persisted.

I understood very well that I must take advantage of the excellent beginning to go further, that my repetitions of "I know all, I know," were becoming ridiculous—but my agitation was so great, that unexpected meeting had thrown me into such confusion, I had lost my self-control to such a degree that I positively was unable to say anything else. Moreover, I really knew nothing more. I felt conscious that I was talking nonsense, felt conscious that, from the mysterious, omniscient being which I must at first appear to her to be, I should soon be converted into a sort of grinning fool . . . . but there was no help for it.

"Yes, I know all,"—I muttered once more.

She darted a glance at me, rose quickly to her feet, and was on the point of departing.

But this was too cruel. I seized her hand.

"For God's sake,"—I began,—"sit down, listen to me. . . ."

She reflected, and seated herself.

"I just told you,"—I went on fervently,—"that I knew everything—that is nonsense. I know nothing; I do not know either who you

are, or who he is, and if I have been able to surprise you by what I said to you a while ago by the column, you must ascribe that to chance alone, to a strange, incomprehensible chance, which, as though in derision, has brought me in contact with you twice, and almost in identically the same way on both occasions, and has made me the involuntary witness of that which, perhaps, you would like to keep secret. . . ."

And thereupon, without the slightest circumlocution, I related to her everything: my meetings with her in Sorrento, in Russia, my futile inquiries in Mikhaílovskoe, even my conversation in Moscow with Madame Shlýkoff and her sister.

"Now you know everything,"—I went on, when I had finished my story.—"I will not undertake to describe to you what an overwhelming impression you made on me: to see you and not to be bewitched by you is impossible. On the other hand, there is no need for me to tell you what the nature of that impression was. Remember under what conditions I beheld you both times. . . . Believe me, I am not fond of indulging in senseless hopes, but you must understand also that inexpressible agitation which has seized upon me to-day, and you must pardon the awkward artifice to which I decided to have recourse in order to attract your attention, if only for a moment . . . ."

She listened to my confused explanations without raising her head.

"What do you want of me?"—she said at last.

"I? . . . I want nothing . . . I am happy as I am. . . . I have too much respect for such secrets."

"Really? But, up to this point, apparently . . . . However,"—she went on,—"I will not reproach you. Any man would have done the same in your place. Moreover, chance really has brought us together so persistently . . . that would seem to give you a certain right to frankness on my part. Listen: I am not one of those uncomprehended and unhappy women who go to masquerades for the sake of chattering to the first man they meet about their sufferings, who require hearts filled with sympathy. . . . I require sympathy from no one; my own heart is dead, and I have come hither in order to bury it definitively."

She raised a handkerchief to her lips.

"I hope"—she went on with a certain amount of effort—"that you do not take my words for the ordinary effusions of a masquerade. You must understand that I am in no mood for that. . . ."

And, in truth, there was something terrible in her voice, despite all the softness of its tones.

"I am a Russian,"—she said in Russian;—up to that point she had expressed herself in the

French language:—" although I have lived little in Russia. . . . It is not necessary for me to know your name. Anna Feódorovna is an old friend of mine; I really did go to Mikhaílovskoe under the name of her sister. . . It was impossible at that time for me to meet him openly. . . And even without that, rumours had begun to circulate . . . at that time, obstacles still existed —he was not free. . . Those obstacles have disappeared . . . but he whose name should become mine, he with whom you saw me, has abandoned me."

She made a gesture with her hand, and paused awhile. . . .

" You really do not know him? You have not met him? "

" Not once."

" He has spent almost all this time abroad. But he is here now. . . . That is my whole history," —she added;—" you see, there is nothing mysterious about it, nothing peculiar."

" And Sorrento? "—I timidly interposed.

" I made his acquaintance in Sorrento,"—she answered slowly, becoming pensive.

Both of us held our peace. A strange discomposure took possession of me. I was sitting beside her, beside that woman whose image had so often flitted through my dreams, had so torturingly agitated and irritated me,—I was sitting beside her and felt a cold and a weight at

my heart. I knew that nothing would come of that meeting, that between her and me there was a gulf, that when we parted we should part forever. With her head bowed forward and both hands lying in her lap, she sat there indifferent and careless. I know that carelessness of incurable grief, I know that indifference of irrecoverable happiness! The masks strolled past us in couples; the sounds of the "monotonous and senseless" waltz now reverberated dully in the distance, now were wafted by in sharp gusts; the merry ball-music agitated me heavily and mournfully. "Can it be,"—I thought,—"that this woman is the same who appeared to me once on a time in the window of that little country house far away, in all the splendour of triumphant beauty? . . . ." And yet, time seemed not to have touched her. The lower part of her face, unconcealed by the lace of her mask, was of almost childish delicacy; but a chill emanated from her, as from a statue. . . . Galatea had returned to her pedestal, and would descend from it no more.

Suddenly she drew herself up, darted a glance into the next room, and rose.

"Give me your arm,"—she said to me. "Let us go away quickly, quickly."

We returned to the ball-room. She walked so fast that I could barely keep up with her. She came to a standstill beside one of the columns.

"Let us wait here,"—she whispered.

"Are you looking for any one?"—I began....

But she paid no heed to me: her eager gaze was fixed upon the crowd. Languidly and menacingly did her great black eyes look forth from beneath the black velvet.

I turned in the direction of her gaze and understood everything. Along the corridor formed by the row of columns and the wall, he was walking, that man whom I had met with her in the forest. I recognised him instantly: he had hardly changed at all. His golden-brown moustache curled as handsomely as ever, his brown eyes beamed with the same calm and self-confident cheerfulness as of yore. He was walking without haste, and, lightly bending his slender figure, was narrating something to a woman in a domino, whose arm was linked in his. As he came on a level with us, he suddenly raised his head, looked first at me, then at the woman with whom I was standing, and probably recognised her eyes, for his eyebrows quivered slightly,—he screwed up his eyes, and a barely perceptible, but intolerably insolent smile hovered over his lips. He bent down to his companion, and whispered a couple of words in her ear; she immediately glanced round, her blue eyes hastily scanned us both, and with a soft laugh she menaced him with her little hand. He slightly shrugged one shoulder, she nestled up to him coquettishly. . . .

I turned to my Unknown. She was gazing

after the receding pair, and suddenly, tearing her arm from mine, she rushed toward the door. I was about to dash after her; but turning round, she gave me such a look that I made her a profound bow, and remained where I was. I understood that to pursue her would be both rude and stupid.

"Tell me, please, my dear fellow,"—I said, half an hour later, to one of my friends—the living directory of Petersburg:—"who is that tall, handsome gentleman with a moustache?"

"That? . . . that is some foreigner or other, a rather enigmatic individual, who very rarely makes his appearance on our horizon. Why do you ask?"

"Oh, because!" . . . .

I returned home. Since that time I have never met my Unknown anywhere. Had I known the name of the man whom she loved, I might, probably, have found out, eventually, who she was, but I myself did not desire that. I have said above that that woman appeared to me like a dream-vision—and like a dream-vision she went past and vanished forever.

MUMÚ

(1852)

MUMÚ

IN one of the remote streets of Moscow, in a grey house with white pillars, an entresol, and a crooked balcony, dwelt in former days a well-born lady, a widow, surrounded by numerous domestics. Her sons were in the service in Petersburg, her daughters were married; she rarely went out into society, and was living out the last years of a miserly and tedious old age in solitude. Her day, cheerless and stormy, was long since over; but her evening also was blacker than night.

Among the ranks of her menials, the most remarkable person was the yard-porter, Gerásim, a man six feet five inches in height, built like an epic hero, and a deaf-mute from his birth. His mistress had taken him from the village, where he lived alone, in a tiny cottage, apart from his brethren, and was considered the most punctual of the taxable serfs. Endowed with remarkable strength, he did the work of four persons. Matters made progress in his hands, and it was a cheerful sight to watch him when he ploughed and, applying his huge hands to the primitive plough, seemed to be carving open the elastic

bosom of the earth alone, without the aid of his little nag; or about St. Peter's Day [1] wielding the scythe so shatteringly that he might even have hewn off a young birch-wood from its roots; or threshing briskly and unremittingly with a chain seven feet in length, while the firm, oblong muscles on his shoulders rose and fell like levers. His uninterrupted muteness imparted to his indefatigable labour a grave solemnity. He was a splendid peasant, and had it not been for his infirmity, any maiden would willingly have married him. . . . But Gerásim was brought to Moscow, boots were bought for him, a broom and a shovel were put into his hand, and he was appointed to be the yard-porter.

At first he felt a violent dislike for his new life. From his childhood he had been accustomed to field-labour, to country life. Set apart by his infirmity from communion with his fellow-men, he had grown up dumb and mighty, as a tree grows on fruitful soil. . . . Transported to the town, he did not understand what was happening to him;—he felt bored and puzzled, as a healthy young bull is puzzled when he has just been taken from the pasture, where the grass grew up to his belly,—when he has been taken, and placed in a railway-wagon,—and, lo, with his robust body enveloped now with smoke and sparks, again with billows of steam, he is drawn headlong onward,

[1] June 29 (O. S.)—July 13 (N. S.).—Translator.

drawn with rumble and squeaking, and whither —God only knows! Gerásim's occupations in his new employment seemed to him a mere farce after his onerous labours as a peasant; in half an hour he had finished everything, and he was again standing in the middle of the courtyard and staring, open-mouthed, at all the passers-by, as though desirous of obtaining from them the solution of his enigmatic situation; or he would suddenly go off to some corner and, flinging his broom or his shovel far from him, would throw himself on the ground face downward, and lie motionless on his breast for whole hours at a time, like a captured wild beast.

But man grows accustomed to everything, and Gerásim got used, at last, to town life! He had not much to do; his entire duty consisted in keeping the courtyard clean, fetching a cask of water twice a day, hauling and chopping up wood for the kitchen and house,[1] and in not admitting strangers, and keeping watch at night. And it must be said that he discharged his duty with zeal; not a chip was ever strewn about his courtyard, nor any dirt; if in muddy weather the broken-winded nag for hauling water and the barrel entrusted to his care got stranded anywhere, all he had to do was to apply his shoulder,

[1] Formerly all Moscow houses were obliged to get their water in barrels on wheels from the river or from public fountains. Birch-wood is still used for cooking and heating.—Translator.

—and not only the cart, but the horse also, would be pried from the spot. If he undertook to chop wood, his axe would ring like glass, and splinters and billets would fly in every direction; and as for strangers—after he had, one night, caught two thieves, and had banged their heads together, and mauled them so that there was no necessity for taking them to the police-station afterward, every one in the neighbourhood began to respect him greatly, and even by day, passers-by who were not in the least rascals, but simply strangers to him, at the sight of the ominous yard-porter, would brandish their arms as though in self-defence, and shout at him as though he were able to hear their cries.

With all the other domestics Gerásim sustained relations which were not exactly friendly,—they were afraid of him,—but gentle; he regarded them as members of the family. They expressed their meaning to him by signs, and he understood them, accurately executed all orders, but knew his own rights also, and no one dared to take his seat at table. On the whole, Gerásim was of stern and serious disposition, and was fond of orderliness in all things; even the cocks did not venture to fight in his presence—but if they did, woe be to them! if he caught sight of them, he would instantly seize them by the legs, whirl them round like a wheel half a score of times in the air, and hurl them in opposite directions. There

were geese also in his lady mistress's courtyard, but a goose, as every one knows, is a serious and sensible bird; Gerásim felt respect for them, tended them, and fed them; he himself bore a resemblance to a stately gander.

He was allotted a tiny chamber over the kitchen; he arranged it himself after his own taste, constructed a bed of oaken planks on four blocks—truly a bed fit for an epic hero; a hundred puds [1] might have been loaded upon it,—it would not have given way. Under the bed was a stout chest; in one corner stood a small table of the same sturdy quality, and beside the table a three-legged chair, and so firm and squatty that Gerásim himself would pick it up, drop it, and grin. This little den was fastened with a padlock which suggested a *kalátch* [2] in shape, only black; Gerásim always carried the key to this lock with him, in his belt. He was not fond of having people come into his room.

In this manner a year passed, at the end of which a small incident happened to Gerásim.

The old gentlewoman with whom he lived as yard-porter in all things followed the ancient customs, and kept a numerous train of domestics; she had in her house not only laundresses, seamstresses, carpenters, tailors, and dressmakers, but

[1] A pud is about thirty-six pounds, English.—Translator.

[2] A peculiarly shaped and delicious wheaten roll, which is made particularly well in Moscow.—Translator.

also one saddler, who set up to be a veterinary and a medical man for the servants as well (there was a house-physician for the mistress), and, in conclusion, there was a shoemaker, by the name of Kapíton Klímoff, a bitter drunkard. Klímoff regarded himself as an injured being and not appreciated at his true value, a cultured man used to the ways of the capital, who ought not to live in Moscow, without occupation, in a sort of desert spot, and if he drank,—as he himself expressed it, with pauses between his words, and thumping himself on the breast,—he drank in reality from grief. One day he was under discussion by the mistress and her head butler, Gavríla, a man who would seem, from his little yellow eyes and his duck's-bill nose, to have been designated by Fate itself as a commanding personage. The mistress was complaining about the depraved morals of Kapíton, who had been picked up somewhere in the street only the night before.

"Well, Gavríla,"—she suddenly remarked:—"shall not we marry him? What dost thou think about it? Perhaps that will steady him."

"Why should n't we marry him, ma'am? It can be done, ma'am,"—replied Gavríla;—"and it would even be a very good thing."

"Yes; only who would marry him?"

"Of course, ma'am. However, as you like, ma'am. He can always be put to some use, so to

speak; you would n't reject him out of any ten men."

"I think he likes Tatyána?"

Gavríla was about to make some reply, but compressed his lips.

"Yes! . . . let him woo Tatyána,"—the mistress announced her decision, as she took a pinch of snuff with satisfaction:—"dost hear me?"

"I obey, ma'am,"—enunciated Gavríla, and withdrew.

On returning to his chamber (it was situated in a wing, and was almost completely filled with wrought-iron coffers), Gavríla first sent away his wife, and then seated himself by the window, and became engrossed in meditation. The mistress's sudden command had evidently dazed him. At last he rose, and ordered Kapíton to be called. Kapíton presented himself. . . . But before we repeat their conversation to the reader, we consider it not superfluous to state, in a few words, who this Tatyána was, whom Kapíton was to marry, and why his mistress's command had disconcerted the major-domo.

Tatyána, who, as we have said above, served as laundress (but, in her quality of expert and well-trained laundress, she was given only the delicate linen), was a woman of eight-and-twenty, small, thin, fair-haired, with moles on her left cheek. Moles on the left cheek are regarded as a bad sign in Russia—as the presage of an unhappy

life. . . . Tatyána could not boast of her luck. From early youth she had been ill-treated; she had worked for two, and had never received any caresses; she was badly clothed; she received the very smallest of wages; she had practically no relatives; an old butler in the village who had been discharged for uselessness was her uncle, and her other uncles were common peasants,—that is all. At one time she had been a beauty, but her beauty soon left her. She was of extremely meek, or, to put it more accurately, frightened disposition, felt the most complete indifference for herself, and was deadly afraid of other people. Her sole thought was as to how she might finish her work by the appointed time. She never talked with any one, and she trembled at the mere mention of the mistress's name, although she hardly knew her by sight.

When Gerásim was brought from the country, she almost swooned with terror at the sight of his huge form, used all possible efforts to avoid meeting him, and even screwed up her eyes when she was obliged to run past him, as she scurried from the house to the laundry. At first, Gerásim paid no special attention to her, then he began to laugh when she crossed his path; then he began to gaze at her with pleasure, and at last he never took his eyes from her. Whether he had taken a liking to her because of her gentle expression of countenance, or of the timidity of her movements—

God knows! And behold, one day, as she was making her way across the courtyard, cautiously elevating on her outspread fingers a starched wrapper belonging to her mistress . . . some one suddenly grasped her by the elbow; she turned round and fairly screamed aloud: behind her stood Gerásim. Laughing stupidly, and bellowing affectionately, he was offering her a gingerbread cock with gold tinsel on its tail and wings. She tried to refuse it, but he thrust it forcibly straight into her hand, nodded his head, walked away, and, turning round, bellowed once more something of a very friendly nature to her. From that day forth he gave her no peace; wherever she went, he immediately came to meet her, smiled, bellowed, waved his hands, suddenly drew a ribbon from his breast and thrust it into her hand, and cleaned the dust away in front of her with his broom.

The poor girl simply did not know how to take it or what to do. The whole household speedily found out about the pranks of the dumb yard-porter; jeers, jests, stinging remarks showered down on Tatyána. But none of them could bring himself to ridicule Gerásim; the latter was not fond of jests; and they let her alone in his presence. Willy-nilly the girl became his protégée. Like all deaf and dumb people, he was very perspicacious, and understood perfectly well when they were laughing at him or at her. One day,

at dinner, the keeper of the linen, Tatyána's chief, undertook, as the saying is, to banter her, and carried it to such a pitch that the latter, poor creature, did not know where to look, and almost wept with vexation. Gerásim suddenly rose halfway, stretched out his enormous hand, laid it on the head of the keeper of the linen, and glared into her face with such ferocity that the latter fairly bent over the table. All fell silent. Gerásim picked up his spoon again, and went on eating his cabbage-soup. "Just see that dumb devil, that forest fiend!" all muttered under their breaths, and the keeper of the linen rose and went off to the maids' room. On another occasion, observing that Kapíton—that same Kapíton of whom we have just been speaking—was chatting in rather too friendly a manner with Tatyána, Gerásim beckoned the man to him, led him away to the carriage-house, and seizing by its end a shaft which was standing in the corner, he menaced him slightly but significantly with it. From that time forth no one dared to address a word to Tatyána. And all this ran smoothly in his hands. No sooner had the linen-keeper, it is true, run into the maids' hall than she fell down in a swoon, and altogether behaved in such an artful manner, that on that very same day she brought to the knowledge of the mistress Gerásim's rude behaviour; but the capricious old lady merely laughed several times, to the extreme offence of

her linen-keeper, made her repeat, "What didst thou say? Did he bend thee down with his heavy hand?" and on the following day sent a silver ruble to Gerásim. She favoured him as a faithful and powerful watchman. Gerásim held her in decided awe, but, nevertheless, he trusted in her graciousness, and was making ready to betake himself to her with the request that she would permit him to marry Tatyána. He was only waiting for the new kaftan promised him by the major-domo, in order that he might present himself before his mistress in decent shape, when suddenly this same mistress took into her head the idea of marrying Tatyána to Kapíton.

The reader will now be able readily to understand the cause of the perturbation which seized upon Gavríla, the major-domo, after his conversation with his mistress. "The mistress,"—he thought, as he sat by the window,—"of course, favours Gerásim" (this was well known to Gavríla, and therefore he also showed indulgence to him); "still, he is a dumb brute. I can't inform the mistress that Gerásim is courting Tatyána. And, after all, 't is just; what sort of a husband is he? And, on the other hand, Lord forgive! for just as soon as that forest fiend finds out that Tatyána is to be married to Kapíton, he 'll smash everything in the house, by Heaven he will! For you can't reason with him—you can't prevail upon him, the devil that he is, in any

way whatsoever—sinful man that I am to have said so wicked a thing . . . . that 's so!" . . . .

The appearance of Kapíton broke the thread of Gavríla's meditations. The giddy-pated shoemaker entered, threw his hands behind him, and, leaning up against a projecting corner of the wall near the door, in a free-and-easy way he stuck his right leg crosswise in front of the left and shook his head, as much as to say: "Here I am. What 's your will?"

Gavríla looked at Kapíton and began to drum on the jamb of the window with his fingers. Kapíton merely narrowed his leaden eyes a bit, but did not lower them, even smiled slightly and passed his hand over his whitish hair, which stood out in disarray in all directions, as much as to say: "Well, yes, 't is I. What are you staring for?"

"Good,"—said Gavríla, and paused for a space.

"Thou 'rt a nice one,"—remarked Gavríla, and paused awhile.—"A nice person, there 's no denying that!"

Kapíton merely shrugged his shoulders. "And art thou any better, pray?" he said to himself.

"Come, now, just look at thyself; come, look,"—went on Gavríla reprovingly;—"Well, art not thou ashamed of thyself?"

Kapíton surveyed with a calm glance his threadbare and tattered coat and his patched trousers, scanned with particular attention his

shoes perforated with holes, especially the one on whose toe his right foot rested in so dandified a manner, and again fixed his eyes on the major-domo.

"What of it, sir?"

"What of it, sir?"—repeated Gavríla.—"What of it, sir? And thou sayest: 'What of it, sir?' to boot! Thou lookest like the devil,—Lord forgive me, sinful man that I am,—that 's what thou lookest like."

Kapíton winked his little eyes briskly.

"Curse away, curse away, Gavríla Andréitch," he thought to himself.

"Thou hast been drunk again, apparently,"—began Gavríla;—"drunk again, surely? Hey? Come, answer."

"Owing to the feebleness of my health, I have succumbed to spirituous beverages, in fact,"—returned Kapíton.

"Owing to feebleness of health? . . . . Thou art not whipped enough, that 's what; and thou hast served thine apprenticeship in Peter[1] to boot. . . . Much thou didst learn in thine apprenticeship! Thou dost nothing but eat the bread of idleness."

"In that case, Gavríla Andréitch, I have but one judge,—the Lord God Himself, and no one else. He alone knows what sort of a man I am in this world, and whether I really do eat the bread

[1] St. Petersburg.—Translator.

of idleness. And as for thy reflections concerning drunkenness,—in that case also I am not to blame, but rather one of my comrades; for he led me astray, and after he had accomplished his crafty purpose, he went away; that is to say, I . . . ."

" And thou didst remain behind, thou goose, in the street. Akh, thou dissolute man! Well, but that 's not the point,"—went on the major-domo, —" but this. The mistress . . . ." here he paused for a moment,—" it is the mistress's pleasure that thou shouldst marry. Hearest thou? She thinks that thou wilt grow steady when thou art married. Dost understand? "

" How can I help understanding, sir? "

" Well, yes. In my opinion, 't would be better to take thee firmly in hand. Well, but that 's her affair. How now? Dost thou consent? "

Kapíton displayed his teeth in a grin.

" Marriage is a good thing for a man, Gavríla Andréitch; and I, on my part, agree with very great pleasure."

" Well, yes,"—returned Gavríla, and thought to himself:—" there 's no denying it, the man talks with exactness."—" Only, see here,"—he went on, aloud:—" an inconvenient bride has been picked out for thee."

" Who is she, permit me to inquire? " . . .

" Tatyána."

" Tatyána? "

And Kapíton's eyes fairly popped out of his head, and he started away from the wall.

"Well, what art thou scared at? . . . Is n't she to thy taste?"

"To my taste, forsooth, Gavríla Andréitch! The girl herself is all right; she 's a good worker, a meek lass. . . . But you know yourself, Gavríla Andréitch, that that forest fiend, that spectre of the steppes, is courting her, you know . . . ."

"I know, brother, I know all,"—the majordomo interrupted him, with vexation:—"but, seest thou . . . ."

"But, good gracious, Gavríla Andréitch! why, he 'll murder me; by Heaven, he 'll murder me, he 'll mash me like a fly! Why, he has a hand—just look for yourself what a hand he has; why, he simply has the hand of Mínin and Pozhársky.[1] For he 's deaf, he 'll kill me, and not hear that he is killing! He flourishes his huge fists exactly as though he were asleep. And there 's no possibility of stopping him. Why? Because, you know yourself, Gavríla Andréitch, he 's deaf, and stupid as an owl into the bargain. Why, he 's a sort of wild beast, a heathen idol, Gavríla Andréitch,—worse than an idol . . . he 's a sort of aspen-block; why should I now suffer from him?

[1] Mínin, the burgher of Nízhni Nóvgorod, and Prince Pozhársky, who led the Russians against the invading Poles in 1612, and expelled them from Russia. Their expulsion was followed by the election to the throne of the first Románoff Tzar, Mikhaíl Feódorovitch.—TRANSLATOR.

Of course nothing matters to me now; I have endured, I have practised patience, I have smeared myself with oil like a glazed Kolómna jug,—all the same, I 'm a man, and not some sort of insignificant jug, as a matter of fact."

" I know, I know; don't give a description. . . ."

" O Lord, my God! "—went on the shoemaker, hotly:—" when will the end come? When, O Lord! I 'm a miserable wretch, a hopeless wretch. 'T is fate, my fate, when you come to think of it! In my younger years I was thrashed by a German master; in the best period of my life I was beaten by my own brother; and at last, in my riper years, to what have I come? . . ."

" Ekh, limp linden-bast soul! "—said Gavríla. —" Why dost thou dilate on the matter, really, now? "

" What do you mean by ' why,' Gavríla Andréitch? I 'm not afraid of blows, Gavríla Andréitch. Let the master thrash me within doors, but give me a greeting before folks, and still I 'm numbered among men; but in this case, from whom must I . . . ."

" Come, now, begone! "—Gavríla interrupted him, impatiently.

Kapíton turned and took himself off.

" And supposing there were no question of him,"—shouted the major-domo after him;— " dost thou consent? "

"I announce my assent,"—replied Kapíton, and lurched out of the room.

His eloquence did not abandon him even in extremities.

The major-domo paced the length of the room several times.

"Well, now summon Tatyána,"—he said at last.

In a few moments Tatyána entered almost inaudibly, and halted on the threshold.

"What is your command, Gavríla Andréitch?" —she said in a quiet voice.

The major-domo gazed fixedly at her.

"Come,"—said he,—"Tániusha, wouldst thou like to marry? The mistress has hunted up a bridegroom for thee."

"I obey, Gavríla Andréitch. But who has been appointed as my bridegroom?"—she added with hesitation.

"Kapíton, the shoemaker."

"I obey, sir."

"He is a reckless man—that 's a fact. But the mistress pins her hopes on thee in that respect."

"I obey, sir."

"It 's a pity about one thing: . . . . there 's that deaf man, Garáska, who 's paying court to thee. And how hast thou bewitched that bear? I do believe he 'll kill thee, the bear that he is. . . ."

"He will, Gavríla Andréitch, he 'll infallibly kill me."

"He will. . . . Well, we 'll see about that. What makes thee say, 'He 'll kill me'? Has he the right to kill thee, pray? Judge for thyself."

"Why, I don't know, Gavríla Andréitch, whether he has a right or not."

"What a girl! I suppose thou hast not made him any promise. . . ."

"What do you mean, sir?"

The major-domo paused for a while, and thought:

"Thou art a meek soul!"—"Well, very good,"—he added; "we will have another talk about it, and now, go thy way, Tatyána; I see that thou really art an obedient girl."

Tatyána turned, leaned lightly against the door-jamb, and left the room.

"But perhaps the mistress will have forgotten about this wedding by to-morrow,"—meditated the major-domo. "Why have I been alarmed? We 'll pinion that insolent fellow if he makes any trouble—we 'll send word to the police. . . . Ustínya Feódorovna!"—he shouted in a loud voice to his wife, "prepare the samovár, my good woman. . . ."

All that day, Tatyána hardly quitted the laundry. At first she wept, then she wiped away her tears, and set to work as of yore. Kapíton sat until the dead of night in a drinking establishment

with a friend of gloomy aspect, and narrated to him in detail how he had lived in Peter with a certain gentleman who had everything that heart could desire, and was a great stickler for order, and withal permitted himself one little delinquency: he was wont to get awfully fuddled, and as for the feminine sex, he simply had all the qualities to attract. . . His gloomy comrade merely expressed assent; but when Kapíton announced, at last, that, owing to certain circumstances, he must lay violent hands upon himself on the morrow, the gloomy comrade remarked that it was time to go to bed. And they parted churlishly, and in silence.

In the meantime, the major-domo's expectations were not realised. The idea of Kapíton's wedding had so captivated the mistress, that even during the night she had talked of nothing else with one of her companions, whom she kept in the house solely in case of sleeplessness, and who, like night cabmen, slept by day. When Gavríla entered her room after tea with his report, her first question was:

"And how about our wedding?"

He replied, of course, that it was progressing famously, and that Kapíton would present himself to her that same day to thank her.

The mistress was slightly indisposed; she did not occupy herself long with business. The major-domo returned to his own room and called

a council. The matter really did require particular consideration. Tatyána did not make any objection, of course; but Kapíton declared, in the hearing of all, that he had but one head, and not two or three heads. . . . Gerásim gazed surlily and swiftly at everybody, never left the maids' porch, and, apparently, divined that something unpleasant for him was brewing. The assembled company (among them was present the old butler, nicknamed Uncle Tail, to whom all respectfully turned for advice, although all they heard from him was "Yes! yes! yes! yes!") began, by way of precaution, for safety, by locking Kapíton up in the lumber-room with the filtering-machine and set to thinking hard. Of course, it was easy to resort to force; but God forbid! there would be a row, the mistress would get uneasy—and a calamity would ensue! What was to be done?

They thought and thought, and eventually they hit upon something. It had been repeatedly noticed that Gerásim could not abide intoxicated persons. . . . As he sat at the gate, he turned away angrily whenever any man with a load of drink aboard passed him with unsteady steps, and the visor of his cap over his ear. They decided to instruct Tatyána to pretend to be intoxicated, and to walk past Gerásim reeling and staggering. The poor girl would not consent for a long time, but they prevailed upon her; moreover, she herself saw that otherwise she would not be able to

get rid of her adorer. She did it. Kapíton was released from the lumber-room; the affair concerned him, anyhow. Gerásim was sitting on the guard-stone at the gate and jabbing the ground with his shovel. . . . There were people staring at him from round all the corners, from behind the window-shades. . . .

The ruse was completely successful. When first he caught sight of Tatyána, he nodded his head with an affectionate bellow; then he took a closer look, dropped his shovel, sprang to his feet, stepped up to her, put his face close down to her face. . . She reeled worse than ever with terror, and closed her eyes. . . . He seized her by the arm, dashed the whole length of the courtyard, and entering the room where the council was in session with her, he thrust her straight at Kapíton. Tatyána was fairly swooning. . . . Gerásim stood there, glared at her, waved his hand, laughed, and departed, clumping heavily to his little den. . . . For four-and-twenty hours he did not emerge thence. Antípka, the postilion, related afterward how, peeping through a crack, he had beheld Gerásim seated on his bed, with his head resting on his hand, quietly, peaceably, and only bellowing from time to time; then he would rock himself to and fro, cover his eyes, and shake his head, as postilions or stevedores do when they strike up their melancholy chanteys. Antípka was frightened, and he retreated from the crack.

But when, on the following day, Gerásim emerged from his den, no particular change was noticeable in him. He merely seemed to have become more surly, and paid not the slightest attention to Tatyána and Kapíton. On that same evening, both of them, with geese under their arms, wended their way to the mistress, and a week later they were married. On the wedding-day itself, Gerásim did not alter his demeanour in the slightest degree; only, he returned from the river without water: somehow, he had smashed the cask on the road; and at night, in the stable, he so zealously curried his horse that the animal reeled like a blade of grass in a gale, and shifted from foot to foot under his iron fists.

All this took place in the spring. Another year passed, in the course of which Kapíton finally became a thorough-going drunkard, and as a man utterly unfit for anything, was despatched with the train of freight-sledges to a distant village, together with his wife. On the day of departure he made a great show of courage at first, and declared that, no matter where they might send him, even to the place where the peasant-wives wash shirts and put their clothes-beaters in the sky, he would not come to grief; but afterward he became low-spirited, began to complain that he was being taken to uncivilised people, and finally weakened to such a degree that he was unable even to put his own cap on his head. Some compas-

sionate soul pulled it down on his brow, adjusted the visor, and banged it down on top. And when all was ready, and the peasants were already holding the reins in their hands, and only waiting for the word: "With God's blessing!" Gerásim emerged from his tiny chamber, approached Tatyána, and presented her with a souvenir consisting of a red cotton kerchief, which he had bought expressly for her a year before. Tatyána, who up to that moment had borne all the vicissitudes of her life with great equanimity, could hold out no longer, and then and there burst into tears, and, as she took her seat in the cart, exchanged three kisses with Gerásim, in Christian fashion.[1] He wanted to escort her to the town barrier, and at first walked alongside her cart, but suddenly halted at the Crimean Ford, waved his hand and directed his steps along the river.

This happened toward evening. He walked quietly, and stared at the water. Suddenly it seemed to him as though something were floundering in the ooze close to the bank. He bent down, and beheld a small puppy, white with black spots, which, despite all its endeavours, utterly unable to crawl out of the water, was struggling, slipping, and quivering all over its wet, gaunt little body. Gerásim gazed at the unfortunate puppy, picked it up with one hand, thrust it into his breast, and set out with great strides home-

[1] These kisses are bestowed on the cheeks, alternately.—Translator.

ward. He entered his little den, laid the rescued puppy on his bed, covered it with his heavy coat, ran first to the stable for straw, then to the kitchen for a cup of milk. Cautiously throwing back the coat and spreading out the straw, he placed the milk on the bed. The poor little dog was only three weeks old; it had only recently got its eyes open, and one eye even appeared to be a little larger than the other; it did not yet know how to drink out of a cup, and merely trembled and blinked. Gerásim grasped it lightly with two fingers by the head, and bent its muzzle down to the milk. The dog suddenly began to drink greedily, snorting, shaking itself and lapping. Gerásim gazed and gazed, and then suddenly began to laugh. . . . All night he fussed over it, put it to bed, wiped it off, and at last fell asleep himself beside it in a joyous, tranquil slumber.

No mother tends her infant as Gerásim tended his nursling. (The dog proved to be a bitch.) In the beginning she was very weak, puny, and ill-favoured, but little by little she improved in health and looks, and at the end of eight months, thanks to the indefatigable care of her rescuer, she had turned into a very fair sort of a dog of Spanish breed, with long ears, a feathery tail in the form of a trumpet, and large, expressive eyes. She attached herself passionately to Gerásim, never left him by a pace, and was always following him, wagging her tail. And he had given her a name,

too,—the dumb know that their bellowing attracts other people's attention to them:—he called her Mumú. All the people in the house took a liking to her, and also called her dear little Mumú. She was extremely intelligent, fawned upon every one, but loved Gerásim alone. Gerásim himself loved her madly . . . . and it was disagreeable to him when others stroked her: whether he was afraid for her, or jealous of her—God knows! She waked him up in the morning by tugging at his coat-tails; she led to him by the reins the old water-horse, with whom she dwelt in great amity; with importance depicted on her face, she went with him to the river; she stood guard over the brooms and shovels, and allowed no one to enter his room. He cut out an aperture in his door expressly for her, and she seemed to feel that only in Gerásim's little den was she the full mistress, and therefore, on entering it, with a look of satisfaction, she immediately leaped upon the bed. At night she did not sleep at all, but she did not bark without discernment, like a stupid watch-dog, which, sitting on its haunches and elevating its muzzle, and shutting its eyes, barks simply out of tedium, at the stars, and usually three times in succession; no! Mumú's shrill voice never resounded without cause! Either a stranger was approaching too close to the fence, or some suspicious noise or rustling had arisen somewhere. . . . . In a word, she kept capital watch.

Truth to tell, there was, in addition to her, an old dog in the courtyard, yellow in hue speckled with dark brown, Peg-top by name (*Voltchók*); but that dog was never unchained, even by night, and he himself, owing to his decrepitude, did not demand freedom, but lay there, curled up in his kennel, and only now and then emitted a hoarse, almost soundless bark, which he immediately broke off short, as though himself conscious of its utter futility.

Mumú did not enter the manor-house, and when Gerásim carried wood to the rooms she always remained behind and impatiently awaited him, with ears pricked up, and her head turning now to the right, then suddenly to the left, at the slightest noise indoors. . . .

In this manner still another year passed. Gerásim continued to discharge his avocations as yard-porter and was very well satisfied with his lot, when suddenly an unexpected incident occurred. . . . Namely, one fine summer day the mistress, with her hangers-on, was walking about the drawing-room. She was in good spirits, and was laughing and jesting; the hangers-on were laughing and jesting also, but felt no particular mirth; the people of the household were not very fond of seeing the mistress in merry mood, because, in the first place, at such times she demanded instantaneous and complete sympathy from every one, and flew into a rage if there was a face which

did not beam with satisfaction; and, in the second place, these fits did not last very long, and were generally succeeded by a gloomy and cross-grained frame of mind. On that day, she seemed to have got up happily; at cards, she held four knaves: the fulfilment of desire (she always told fortunes with the cards in the morning),—and her tea struck her as particularly delicious, in consequence whereof the maid received praise in words and ten kopéks in money. With a sweet smile on her wrinkled lips, the lady of the house strolled about her drawing-room and approached the window. A flower-garden was laid out in front of the window, and in the very middle of the border, under a rose-bush, lay Mumú assiduously gnawing a bone. The mistress caught sight of her.

"My God!"—she suddenly exclaimed;—"what dog is that?"

The hanger-on whom the mistress addressed floundered, poor creature, with that painful uneasiness which generally takes possession of a dependent person when he does not quite know how he is to understand his superior's exclamation.

"I . . . d . . do . . . . on't know, ma'am," she stammered; "I think it belongs to the dumb man."

"My God!"—her mistress interrupted her:—"why, it is a very pretty dog! Order it to be

brought hither. Has he had it long? How is it that I have not seen it before? . . . Order it to be brought hither."

The hanger-on immediately fluttered out into the anteroom.

"Man, man!"—she screamed,—"bring Mumú here at once! She is in the flower-garden."

"And so her name is Mumú,"—said the mistress;—"a very nice name."

"Akh, very nice indeed, ma'am!"—replied the dependent.—"Be quick, Stepán!"

Stepán, a sturdy young fellow, who served as footman, rushed headlong to the garden and tried to seize Mumú; but the latter cleverly slipped out of his fingers, and elevating her tail, set off at full gallop to Gerásim, who was in the kitchen beating out and shaking out the water-cask, twirling it about in his hands like a child's drum. Stepán ran after her, and tried to seize her at the very feet of her master; but the agile dog would not surrender herself into the hands of a stranger, and kept leaping and evading him. Gerásim looked on at all this tumult with a grin; at last Stepán rose in wrath, and hastily gave him to understand by signs that the mistress had ordered the dog to be brought to her. Gerásim was somewhat surprised, but he called Mumú, lifted her from the ground, and handed her to Stepán. Stepán carried her into the drawing-room, and placed her on the polished wood floor. The mistress

began to call the dog to her in a caressing voice. Mumú, who had never in her life been in such magnificent rooms, was extremely frightened, and tried to dart through the door, but, rebuffed by the obsequious Stepán, fell to trembling, and crouched against the wall.

"Mumú, Mumú, come hither to me,"—said the mistress;—"come, thou stupid creature . . . . don't be afraid. . . ."

"Come, Mumú, come to the mistress,"—repeated the dependents;—"come!"

But Mumú looked anxiously about and did not stir from the spot.

"Bring her something to eat,"—said the mistress.—"What a stupid thing she is! She won't come to the mistress. What is she afraid of?"

"She feels strange still,"—remarked one of the dependents, in a timid and imploring voice.

Stepán brought a saucer of milk and set it in front of Mumú, but Mumú did not even smell of the milk, and kept on trembling and gazing about her, as before.

"Akh, who ever saw such a creature!"—said the mistress, as she approached her, bent down and was on the point of stroking her; but Mumú turned her head and displayed her teeth in a snarl. —The mistress hastily drew back her hand.

A momentary silence ensued. Mumú whined faintly, as though complaining and excusing herself. . . The mistress retreated and frowned.

The dog's sudden movement had frightened her.

"Akh!"—cried all the dependents with one accord:—"She did n't bite you, did she? God forbid!" (Mumú had never bitten any one in her life.) "Akh! akh!"

"Take her away,"—said the old woman, in an altered voice,—"the horrid little dog! What a vicious beast she is!"

And slowly turning, she went toward her boudoir. The dependents exchanged timorous glances and started to follow her, but she paused, looked coldly at them, said: "Why do you do that? for I have not bidden you," and left the room.

The dependents waved their hands in despair at Stepán; the latter picked up Mumú and flung her out into the yard as speedily as possible, straight at Gerásim's feet; and half an hour later a profound stillness reigned in the house, and the old gentlewoman sat on her divan more lowering than a thunder-cloud.

What trifles, when one comes to think of it, can sometimes put a person out of tune!

The lady was out of sorts until evening, talked with no one, did not play cards, and passed a bad night. She took it into her head that they had not given her the same *eau de cologne* which they usually gave her, that her pillow smelled of soap, and made the keeper of the linen-closet smell

all the bed-linen twice,—in a word, she was upset and extremely incensed. On the following morning she ordered Gavríla to be summoned to her presence an hour earlier than usual.

"Tell me, please,"—she began, as soon as the latter, not without some inward quaking, had crossed the threshold of her boudoir,—"why that dog was barking in our courtyard all night long? It prevented my getting to sleep!"

"A dog, ma'am . . . . which one, ma'am? . . . Perhaps it was the dumb man's dog,"—he uttered in a voice that was not altogether firm.

"I don't know whether it belongs to the dumb man or to some one else, only it interfered with my sleep. And I am amazed that there is such a horde of dogs! I want to know about it. We have a watch-dog, have we not?"

"Yes, ma'am, we have, ma'am, Peg-top, ma'am."

"Well, what need have we for any more dogs? They only create disorder. There 's no head to the house,—that 's what 's the matter. And what does the dumb man want of a dog? Who has given him permission to keep a dog in my courtyard? Yesterday I went to the window, and it was lying in the garden; it had brought some nasty thing there, and was gnawing it,—and I have roses planted there. . . ."

The lady paused for a while.

"See that it is removed this very day . . . . dost hear me?"

"I obey, ma'am."

"This very day. And now, go. I will have thee called for thy report later."

Gavríla left the room.

As he passed through the drawing-room, the major-domo transferred a small bell from one table to another, for show, softly blew his duck's-bill nose in the hall, and went out into the anteroom. In the anteroom, on a locker, Stepán was sleeping in the attitude of a slain warrior in a battalion picture, with his bare legs projecting from his coat, which served him in lieu of a coverlet.

The major-domo nudged him, and imparted to him in an undertone some order, to which Stepán replied with a half-yawn, half-laugh. The major-domo withdrew, and Stepán sprang to his feet, drew on his kaftan and his boots, went out and came to a standstill on the porch. Five minutes had not elapsed before Gerásim made his appearance with a huge fagot of firewood on his back, accompanied by his inseparable Mumú. (The mistress had issued orders that her bedroom and boudoir were to be heated even in summer.) Gerásim stood sideways to the door, gave it a push with his shoulder, and precipitated himself into the house with his burden. Mumú, according to her wont, remained behind to wait for

him. Then Stepán, seizing a favourable moment, made a sudden dash at her, like a hawk pouncing on a chicken, crushed her to the ground with his breast, gathered her up in his arms, and without stopping to don so much as his cap, ran out into the street with her, jumped into the first drozhky that came to hand, and galloped off to the Game Market. There he speedily hunted up a purchaser, to whom he sold her for half a ruble, stipulating only that the latter should keep her tied up for at least a week, and immediately returned home; but before he reached the house, he alighted from the drozhky, and making a circuit of the house, he leaped over the fence into the yard from a back alley; he was afraid to enter by the wicket, lest he should encounter Gerásim.

But his anxiety was wasted; Gerásim was no longer in the courtyard. On coming out of the house he had instantly bethought himself of Mumú; he could not remember that she had ever failed to await his return, and he began to run in every direction to hunt for her, to call her after his own fashion . . . he dashed into his little chamber, to the hay-loft; he darted into the street, —hither and thither. . . . She was gone! He appealed to the domestics, with the most despairing signs inquired about her; pointing fourteen inches from the ground, he drew her form with his hands. . . . Some of them really did not know what had become of Mumú, and only shook their

heads; others did know and grinned at him in reply, but the major-domo assumed a very pompous mien and began to shout at the coachmen. Then Gerásim fled far away from the courtyard.

Twilight was already falling when he returned. One was justified in assuming, from his exhausted aspect, from his unsteady gait, from his dusty clothing, that he had wandered over the half of Moscow. He halted in front of the mistress's windows, swept a glance over the porch on which seven house-serfs were gathered, turned away, and bellowed once more: "Mumú!"—Mumú did not respond. He went away. All stared after him, but no one smiled, no one uttered a word . . . and the curious postilion, Antípka, narrated on the following morning in the kitchen, that the dumb man had moaned all night long.

All the following day Gerásim did not show himself, so that Potáp the coachman was obliged to go for water in his stead, which greatly displeased coachman Potáp. The mistress asked Gavríla whether her command had been executed. Gavríla replied that it had. The next morning Gerásim emerged from his chamber to do his work. He came to dinner, ate and went off again, without having exchanged greetings with any one. His face, which was inanimate at the best of times, as is the case with all deaf and dumb persons, now seemed to have become absolutely petrified. After dinner he again quitted

the courtyard, but not for long, returned and immediately directed his steps to the hay-barn. Night came, a clear, moonlight night. Sighing heavily and incessantly tossing from side to side, Gerásim was lying there, when he suddenly felt as though something were tugging at the skirts of his garments; he trembled all over, but did not raise his head, nevertheless, and even screwed his eyes up tight; but the tugging was repeated, more energetically than before; he sprang to his feet . . . . before him, with a fragment of rope about her neck, Mumú was capering about. A prolonged shriek of joy burst from his speechless breast; he seized Mumú and clasped her in a close embrace; in one moment she had licked his nose, his eyes, and his beard. . . He stood still for a while, pondering, cautiously slipped down from the hay-mow, cast a glance round him, and having made sure that no one was watching him, he safely regained his little chamber.

Even before this Gerásim had divined that the dog had not disappeared of her own volition; that she must have been carried away by the mistress's command; for the domestics had explained to him by signs how his Mumú had snapped at her —and he decided to take precautions of his own. First he fed Mumú with some bread, caressed her, and put her to bed; then he began to consider how he might best conceal her. At last he hit upon

the idea of leaving her all day in his room, and only looking in now and then to see how she was getting along, and taking her out for exercise at night. He closed the opening in his door compactly by stuffing in an old coat of his, and as soon as it was daylight he was in the courtyard, as though nothing had happened, even preserving (innocent guile!) his former dejection of countenance. It could not enter the head of the poor deaf man that Mumú would betray herself by her whining; as a matter of fact, every one in the house was speedily aware that the dumb man's dog had come back and was locked up in his room; but out of compassion for him and for her, and partly, perhaps, out of fear of him, they did not give him to understand that his secret had been discovered.

The major-domo alone scratched the back of his head and waved his hand in despair, as much as to say: "Well, I wash my hands of the matter! Perhaps the mistress will not get to know of it!" And never had the dumb man worked so zealously as on that day; he swept and scraped out the entire courtyard, he rooted up all the blades of grass to the very last one, with his own hand pulled up all the props in the garden-fence, with a view to making sure that they were sufficiently firm, and then hammered them in again, —in a word, he fussed and bustled about so, that even the mistress noticed his zeal.

Twice in the course of the day Gerásim went stealthily to his captive; and when night came, he lay down to sleep in her company, in the little room, not in the hay-barn, and only at one o'clock did he go out to take a stroll with her in the fresh air. Having walked quite a long time with her in the courtyard, he was preparing to return, when suddenly a noise resounded outside the fence in the direction of the alley. Mumú pricked up her ears, began to growl, approached the fence, sniffed, and broke forth into a loud and piercing bark. Some drunken man or other had taken it into his head to nestle down there for the night. At that very moment, the mistress had just got to sleep after a prolonged " nervous excitement "; she always had these excited fits after too hearty a supper. The sudden barking woke her; her heart began to beat violently, and to collapse.

" Maids, maids! "—she moaned.—" Maids! "

The frightened maids flew to her bedroom.

" Okh, okh, I 'm dying! "—said she, throwing her hands apart in anguish.—" There 's that dog again, again! . . . Okh, send for the doctor! They want to kill me. . . The dog, the dog again! Okh! "

And she flung back her head, which was intended to denote a swoon.

They ran for the doctor, that is to say, for the household medical man, Kharitón. The whole art of this healer consisted in the fact that he wore

boots with soft soles, understood how to feel the pulse delicately, slept fourteen hours out of the twenty-four, spent the rest of the time in sighing, and was incessantly treating the mistress to laurel drops. This healer immediately hastened to her, fumigated with burnt feathers, and when the mistress opened her eyes, immediately presented to her on a silver tray a wine-glass with the inevitable drops.

The mistress took them, but immediately, with tearful eyes, began to complain of the dog, of Gavríla, of her lot, that she, a poor old woman, had been abandoned by every one, that no one had any pity on her, and that every one desired her death. In the meantime the unlucky Mumú continued to bark, while Gerásim strove in vain to call her away from the fence.

"There . . . there . . . . it goes again! . . ." stammered the mistress, and again rolled up her eyes. The medical man whispered to one of the maids; she rushed into the anteroom, and explained matters to Stepán; the latter ran to awaken Gavríla, and Gavríla, in a passion, gave orders that the whole household should be roused.

Gerásim turned round, beheld the twinkling lights and shadows in the windows, and, foreboding in his heart a catastrophe, he caught up Mumú under his arm, ran into his room and locked the door. A few moments later, five men were thumping at his door, but feeling the re-

sistance of the bolt, desisted. Gavríla ran up in a frightful hurry, ordered them all to remain there until morning and stand guard, while he himself burst into the maids' hall and gave orders through the eldest companion, Liubóff [1] Liubímovna,—together with whom he was in the habit of stealing and enjoying tea, sugar, and other groceries,—that the mistress was to be informed that the dog, unfortunately, had run home again from somewhere or other, but that it would not be alive on the morrow, and that the mistress must do them the favour not to be angry, and must calm down. The mistress probably would not have calmed down very speedily, had not the medical man, in his haste, poured out forty drops instead of twelve. The strength of the laurel took its effect —in a quarter of an hour the mistress was sleeping soundly and peacefully, and Gerásim was lying, all pale, on his bed, tightly compressing Mumú's mouth.

On the following morning the mistress awoke quite late. Gavríla was waiting for her awakening in order to make a decisive attack upon Gerásim's asylum, and was himself prepared to endure a heavy thunder-storm. But the thunder-storm did not come off. As she lay in bed, the mistress ordered the eldest dependent to be called to her.

"Liubóff Liubímovna,"—she began in a soft, weak voice; she sometimes liked to pretend to

[1] Amy or Charity.—Translator.

be a persecuted and defenceless sufferer; it is needless to state that at such times all the people in the house felt very uncomfortable:—"Liubóff Liubímovna, you see what my condition is; go, my dear, to Gavríla Andréitch, and have a talk with him; it cannot be possible that some nasty little dog or other is more precious to him than the tranquillity, the very life of his mistress! I should not like to believe that,"—she added, with an expression of profound emotion:—"Go, my dear, be so good, go to Gavríla Andréitch."

Liubóff Liubímovna betook herself to Gavríla's room. What conversation took place between them is not known; but a while later a whole throng of domestics marched through the courtyard in the direction of Gerásim's little den; in front walked Gavríla, holding on his cap with his hand, although there was no wind; around him walked footmen and cooks; Uncle Tail gazed out of the window, and issued orders—that is to say, he merely spread his hands apart; in the rear of all, the small urchins leaped and capered, one half of them being strangers who had run in. On the narrow stairway leading to the den sat one sentry; at the door stood two others with clubs. They began to ascend the staircase, and occupied it to its full length. Gavríla went to the door, knocked on it with his fist, and shouted:

"Open!"

A suppressed bark made itself audible; but there was no reply.

"Open, I say!"—he repeated.

"But, Gavríla Andréitch,"—remarked Stepán from below:—"he 's deaf, you know—he does n't hear."

All burst out laughing.

"What is to be done?"—retorted Gavríla from the top of the stairs.

"Why, he has a hole in his door,"—replied Stepán;—"so do you wiggle a stick around in it a bit."

Gavríla bent down.

"He has stuffed it up with some sort of coat, that hole."

"But do you poke the coat inward."

At this point another dull bark rang out.

"See there, see there, she 's giving herself away!"—some one remarked in the crowd, and again there was laughter.

Gavríla scratched behind his ear.

"No, brother,"—he went on at last;—"do thou poke the coat through thyself, if thou wishest."

"Why, certainly!"

And Stepán scrambled up, took a stick, thrust the coat inside, and began to wiggle the stick about in the opening, saying: "Come forth, come forth!" He was still wiggling the stick when the door of the little chamber flew suddenly and swiftly open—and the whole train of menials

rolled head over heels down the stairs, Gavríla in the lead. Uncle Tail shut the window.

"Come, come, come, come!"—shouted Gavríla from the courtyard;—"just look out, look out!"

Gerásim stood motionless on the threshold. The crowd assembled at the foot of the staircase. Gerásim stared at all these petty folk in their foreign kaftans from above, with his arms lightly set akimbo; in his scarlet peasant shirt he seemed like a giant in comparison with them. Gavríla advanced a pace.

"See here, brother,"—said he:—"I 'll take none of thy impudence."

And he began to explain to him by signs: "The mistress insists upon having thy dog: hand it over instantly, or 't will be the worse for thee."

Gerásim looked at him, pointed to the dog, made a sign with his hand at his own neck, as though he were drawing up a noose, and cast an inquiring glance at the major-domo.

"Yes, yes,"—replied the latter, nodding his head;—"yes, she insists."

Gerásim dropped his eyes, then suddenly shook himself, again pointed at Mumú, who all this time had been standing by his side, innocently wagging her tail and moving her ears to and fro with curiosity, repeated the sign of strangling over his own neck, and significantly smote himself on the breast, as though declaring that he would take it upon himself to annihilate Mumú.

"But thou wilt deceive,"—waved Gavríla to him in reply.

Gerásim looked at him, laughed disdainfully, smote himself again on the breast, and slammed the door.

All present exchanged glances in silence.

"Well, and what 's the meaning of this?"—began Gavríla.—"He has locked himself in."

"Let him alone, Gavríla Andréitch,"—said Stepán;—"he 'll do it, if he has promised. That 's the sort of fellow he is. . . . If he once promises a thing, it 's safe. He is n't like us folks in that respect. What is true is true. Yes."

"Yes,"—repeated all, and wagged their heads. —"That 's so. Yes."

Uncle Tail opened the window and said "Yes," also.

"Well, we shall see, I suppose,"—returned Gavríla;—"but the guard is not to be removed, notwithstanding. Hey, there, Eróshka!"—he added, addressing a poor man in a yellow nankeen kazák coat, who was reckoned as the gardener:—"what hast thou to do? Take a stick and sit here, and if anything happens, run for me on the instant."

Eróshka took a stick and sat down on the last step of the staircase. The crowd dispersed, with the exception of a few curious bodies and the small urchins, while Gavríla returned home, and

through Liubóff Liubímovna gave orders that the mistress should be informed that everything had been done, and that he himself, in order to make quite sure, had sent the postilion for a policeman. The mistress tied a knot in her handkerchief, poured *eau de cologne* on it, sniffed at it, wiped her temples, sipped her tea and, being still under the influence of the laurel drops, fell asleep again.

An hour after all this commotion, the door of the tiny den opened and Gerásim made his appearance. He wore a new holiday kaftan; he was leading Mumú by a string. Eróshka drew aside and let him pass. Gerásim directed his way toward the gate. All the small boys who were in the courtyard followed him with their eyes in silence. He did not even turn round; he did not put on his cap until he reached the street. Gavríla despatched after him that same Eróshka, in the capacity of observer. Eróshka, perceiving from afar that he had entered an eating-house in company with his dog, awaited his reappearance.

In the eating-house they knew Gerásim and understood his signs. He ordered cabbage-soup with meat, and seated himself, with his arms resting on the table. Mumú stood beside his chair, calmly gazing at him with her intelligent eyes. Her coat was fairly shining with gloss: it was evident that she had recently been brushed. They brought the cabbage-soup to Gerásim. He crumbled up bread in it, cut the meat up into

small pieces, and set the plate on the floor. Mumú began to eat with her customary politeness, hardly touching her muzzle to the food; Gerásim stared long at her; two heavy tears rolled suddenly from his eyes; one fell on the dog's sloping forehead, the other into the soup. He covered his face with his hand. Mumú ate half a plateful and retired, licking her chops. Gerásim rose, paid for the soup, and set out, accompanied by the somewhat astounded glance of the waiter. Eróshka, on catching sight of Gerásim, sprang round the corner, and allowing him to pass, again set out on his track.

Gerásim walked on without haste, and did not release Mumú from the cord. On reaching the corner of the street he halted, as though in thought, and suddenly directed his course, with swift strides, straight toward the Crimean Ford. On the way he entered the yard of a house, to which a wing was being built, and brought thence two bricks under his arm. From the Crimean Ford he turned along the bank, advanced to a certain spot, where stood two boats with oars, tied to stakes (he had already noted them previously), and sprang into one of them, in company with Mumú. A lame little old man emerged from behind a hut placed in one corner of a vegetable-garden, and shouted at him. But Gerásim only nodded his head, and set to rowing so vigorously, although against the current, that in an

instant he had darted off to a distance of a hundred fathoms. The old man stood and stood, scratched his back, first with the left hand then with the right, and returned, limping, to his hut.

But Gerásim rowed on and on. And now he had left Moscow behind him. Now, already meadows, fields, groves stretched along the shores, and peasant cottages made their appearance. It smacked of the country. He flung aside the oars, bent his head down to Mumú, who was sitting in front of him on a dry thwart,—the bottom was inundated with water,—and remained motionless, with his mighty hands crossed on her back, while the boat drifted a little backward with the current toward the town. At last Gerásim straightened up hastily, with a sort of painful wrath on his face, wound the rope around the bricks he had taken, arranged a noose, put it on Mumú's neck, lifted her over the river, for the last time gazed at her. . . . She gazed back at him confidingly and without alarm, waving her little tail slightly. He turned away, shut his eyes, and opened his hands. . . Gerásim heard nothing, neither the swift whine of the falling Mumú, nor the loud splash of the water; for him the noisiest day was silent and speechless, as not even the quietest night is to us, and when he opened his eyes again, the little waves were hurrying down the river as before; as before they were plashing

about the sides of the boat, and only far astern toward the shore certain broad circles were spreading.

Eróshka, as soon as Gerásim vanished from his sight, returned home and reported what he had seen.

"Well, yes,"—remarked Stepán;—"he will drown her. You may be easy about that. If he has once promised a thing . . . ."

Throughout the day no one saw Gerásim. He did not dine at home. Evening came; all, except him, assembled for supper.

"What a queer fellow that Gerásim is!"—squealed a fat laundress. "The idea of making such a fuss over a dog! . . . Really!"

"But Gerásim has been here,"—suddenly exclaimed Stepán, as he scooped up his buckwheat groats with his spoon.

"What? When?"

"Why, a couple of hours ago. Certainly he has! I met him at the gate; he has gone away from here again; he went out of the courtyard. I wanted to ask him about his dog, but he evidently was out of sorts. Well, and he jostled me; it must have been done by accident, he only wanted to get me out of the way; as much as to say: 'Don't bother me!'—but he gave me such a dig in the spine, that óï, óï, óï!"—And Stepán shrugged his shoulders with an involuntary grimace, and rubbed the nape of his neck.—"Yes,"

—he added;—"his hand is an apt one, there 's no denying that!"

All laughed at Stepán and, after supper, dispersed to their beds.

And in the meantime, on that same night, on the T*** highway, a giant was marching onward diligently and unremittingly, with a sack on his shoulders, and a long staff in his hands. It was Gerásim. He was hurrying on, without looking behind him, hurrying home, to his own house in the country, to his native place. After drowning poor Mumú, he had hastened to his little den, had briskly put together a few articles of clothing in an old horse-cloth, had tied it up with a knot, slung it across his shoulder, and taken himself off. He had noted well the road when he had been brought to Moscow; the village from which his mistress had taken him lay at most five-and-twenty versts from the highway. He walked along it with a certain invincible hardihood, with despairing, yet joyful firmness. He strode onward, his breast expanded broadly; his eyes were bent eagerly straight ahead. He hastened onward as though his aged mother were waiting for him in his native place, as though she had summoned him to her after long wanderings in foreign lands, among strange peoples. . . The summer night, which had only just descended, was warm and tranquil; on the one hand, in the direction where the sun had gone down, the rim

of the sky was still white, with a crimson gleam from the last reflection of the vanished day,—on the other hand, the blue-grey gloom was rising. Night had come thence. Hundreds of quail were whistling all around, corn-crakes were vying with each other in their calls. . . . Gerásim could not hear them, he could not hear even the delicate nocturnal rustling of the trees past which he was bearing his mighty feet, but he discerned the familiar scent of the ripening rye, which was exhaled from the dark fields; he felt the breeze wafting to meet him,—the breeze from his native place,—beating on his face, playing with his hair and beard; he beheld in front of him the road homeward, gleaming white, straight as an arrow; he beheld in the sky innumerable stars, which illuminated his path, and like a lion he stepped out powerfully and alertly, so that when the rising sun lighted up with its moistly-crimson rays the gallant fellow who had just been driven to extremities, three-and-thirty versts already lay between him and Moscow. . . .

At the end of two days he was at home in his own little cottage, to the great amazement of the soldier's wife who had removed thither. After praying before the holy pictures, he immediately betook himself to the overseer. The overseer was astounded at first; but the haying was only just beginning. Gerásim, being a capital workman, immediately had a scythe put into his hand—

and he went off to mow as of yore, to mow in such fashion that the peasants simply sweated through and through as they watched his swings and strokes. . . .

But in Moscow, on the day following Gerásim's flight, they discovered it. They went into his room, ransacked it, and told Gavríla. The latter came, made an inspection, shrugged his shoulders, and decided that the dumb man had either run away or drowned himself along with his stupid dog. The police were informed, and the matter was reported to the mistress. The mistress flew into a rage, fell to weeping, ordered him to be hunted up at any cost, asserted that she had never ordered the dog to be made away with, and, at last, so berated Gavríla, that the latter did nothing all day but shake his head and add: "Well!" until Uncle Tail brought him to his senses by saying to him: "We-ell!" At last news came from the village of Gerásim's arrival there. The mistress calmed down somewhat; at first she was minded to issue an order demanding his immediate return to Moscow, but afterward she announced that she wanted nothing to do with so ungrateful a man. Moreover, she died herself soon after, and her heirs had other things to think about besides Gerásim; and they dismissed the rest of their mother's serfs on quit-rent.

And Gerásim is living yet, poor, wretched fel-

low, in his lonely hut; he is healthy and powerful as of yore, and, as of yore, he does the work of four men, and, as of yore, he is staid and dignified. But the neighbours have noticed that ever since his return from Moscow he has entirely ceased to have anything to do with women, he does not even look at them, and he keeps not a single dog on his premises.—"However,"—say the peasants,—"'t is lucky for him that he needs no woman; and as for a dog—what should he do with a dog? you could n't drag a thief into his yard with a noose!" Such is the fame of the dumb man's heroic strength.

THE INN

(1852)

THE INN

ON the great B*** highway, almost equidistant from the two county towns through which it passes, there was still standing, not long since, a spacious inn, very well known to drivers of tróïka-teams, to freight-sledge peasants, to merchants' clerks, to traders of the petty-burgher class, and, in general, to all the numerous and varied travellers, who at all seasons of the year roll along our roads. Everybody used to drop in at this inn; except only some landed proprietor's carriage, drawn by six home-bred horses, would glide solemnly past, which, however, did not prevent the coachman and the lackey on the foot-board from looking with particular feeling and attention at the porch but too familiar to them; or some very poor fellow, in a rickety cart, with fifteen kopéks in the purse stuffed into his bosom, on coming to the fine inn, would urge on his weak nag, hastening to his night's lodging in the suburb on the great highway, to the house of the peasant-host, where you will find nothing except hay and bread, but, on the other hand, will not be obliged to pay a kopék too much.

In addition to its advantageous situation, the

inn of which we have just spoken possessed many attractions: capital water in two deep wells with creaking wheels and iron buckets on chains; a spacious stable-yard with plenty of board sheds on stout pillars; an abundant supply of good oats in the cellar; a warm house, with a huge Russian stove, into which, as upon the shoulders of an epic hero, long logs were thrust; two fairly-clean little chambers with reddish-lilac paper on the walls somewhat tattered at the bottom, with a painted wooden divan, chairs to match, and two pots of geranium in the windows, which, however, were never washed and were dim with the dust of many years. This inn offered other comforts:—the blacksmith's shop was near at hand, and the mill was situated almost alongside of it; in conclusion, good food was to be had in it, thanks to the fat and rosy-cheeked peasant-woman who was the cook, and who prepared the viands in a savoury manner and with plenty of fat, and was not stingy of her stores; the nearest dram-shop was only half a verst distant; the landlord kept snuff, which, although mixed with ashes, was extremely heady, and tickled the nose agreeably: in a word, there were many reasons why guests of every sort were not lacking in that inn. Travellers had taken a fancy to it—that is the principal thing; without that, as is well known, no business will thrive; and it was liked most of all because, as people said in the country-

side, the landlord himself was very lucky and succeeded in all his enterprises, although he little deserved his luck, and it was evident that if a man is destined to be lucky he will be.

This landlord was a petty burgher, Naúm Ivánoff by name. He was of medium stature, thickset, stooping and broad-shouldered; he had a large, round head, hair which was wavy and already grizzled, although in appearance he was not over forty years of age; a plump and rosy face, a low, but white and smooth brow, and small, bright blue eyes, with which he gazed forth very strangely—askance, and, at the same time, insolently, which is a combination rarely encountered. He always held his head in a drooping position, and turned it with difficulty, perhaps because his neck was very short; he walked briskly and did not swing his arms, but opened his clenched fists as he walked. When he smiled,—and he smiled frequently, but without laughter, as though to himself,—his large lips moved apart in an unpleasant way, and displayed a row of compact and dazzling teeth. He spoke abruptly, and with a certain surly sound in his voice. He shaved off his beard, but did not adopt the foreign dress. His garments consisted of a long, extremely-threadbare kaftan, ample bag-trousers, and shoes worn on the bare feet. He often absented himself from home on business,—and he had a great deal of business: he was a jobber of

horses, he hired land, he raised vegetables for the market, he purchased gardens, and in general occupied himself with various commercial speculations,—but his absences never lasted long; like the hawk, to whom in particular, especially as to the expression of his eyes, he bore a strong resemblance, he kept returning to his nest. He understood how to keep that nest in order; he kept track of everything, he heard everything, and gave orders about everything; he dealt out, he served out, and calculated everything himself, and while he did not reduce his price a kopék to any one, yet he did not overcharge.

The lodgers did not enter into conversation with him, and he himself was not fond of wasting words without cause. "I need your money, and you need my victuals," he was wont to explain, as though he were tearing off each separate word: "you and I have n't got to stand godparents to a child and become cronies; the traveller has eaten, I have fed him his fill, let him not outstay his welcome. And if he is sleepy, then let him sleep, not chatter." He kept sturdy and healthy, but tame and submissive labourers; they were extremely afraid of him. He never took a drop of intoxicating liquor into his mouth, but he gave each of them ten kopéks for vodka on festival days; on other days they did not dare to drink. People like Naúm speedily grow rich; . . . . but Naúm Ivánoff had not reached the brilliant con-

dition in which he found himself—and he was reckoned to be worth forty or fifty thousand rubles—by straightforward ways. . . .

Twenty years previous to the date at which we have set the beginning of our story, an inn existed on that same site upon the highway. Truth to tell, it had not that dark-red plank roof which imparted to Naúm Ivánoff's house the aspect of a nobleman's manor-house; and it was poorer in its construction, and the sheds in the stable-yard were thatched, and the walls were made of wattled boughs instead of boards; neither was it distinguished by a triangular Greek pediment on turned columns; but it was a very decent sort of inn, nevertheless,—spacious, solid, and warm,—and travellers gladly frequented it. Its landlord at that time was not Naúm Ivánoff, but a certain Akím Semyónoff, the serf of a neighbouring landed proprietress, Lizavéta Prókhorovna Kuntze—the widow of a staff-officer. This Akím was an intelligent peasant, with good business capacity, who, having started with two wretched little nags as a carrier, in his youth, returned a year later with three good horses, and from that time forth spent the greater part of his life in roaming along the highways, visited Kazán and Odessa, Orenbúrg and Warsaw, and went abroad to "Lipetzk," [1] and travelled toward the last with two tróïkas of huge and powerful stal-

[1] Leipzig.

lions harnessed to two enormous carts. Whether it was that he became bored by this homeless, roving life, or whether he was seized with the desire to set up a family (in one of his absences his wife had died; the children which he had had died also), at all events he decided, at last, to abandon his former avocation and set up an inn.

With the permission of his mistress, he established himself on the highway, purchased in her name half a *desyatína*[1] of land, and erected thereon an inn. The venture proved a success. He had more than enough money for the installation; the experience which he had acquired in his prolonged wanderings to all parts of Russia was of the greatest advantage to him: he knew how to please travellers, especially men of his own former calling,—three-horse-team carriers,—with many of whom he was personally acquainted, and whose patronage is particularly valued by the tavern-keepers: so much do these people eat and consume for themselves and their robust horses. Akím's inn became known for hundreds of versts round about. . . . People were even fonder of patronising him than they were of patronising Naúm, who afterward succeeded him, although Akím was far from being comparable to Naúm in his knowledge of the landlord's business.

Akím had everything established on the old-

[1] A *desyatína* is 2.70 acres. He was obliged to buy the land in his owner's name: serfs could not hold landed property.—Translator.

fashioned footing,—warm but not quite clean; and it sometimes happened that his oats turned out to be light, or damp, and the food also was prepared in rather indifferent fashion; such victuals were sometimes served on his table as had been better left in the oven for good, and that not because he was stingy with material, but just because it happened so—his wife had not looked after things. On the other hand, he was ready to deduct from the price, and he would even not refuse to give credit. In a word, he was a good man and an amiable landlord. He was liberal also with his conversation and standing treat; over the samovár he would sometimes get to babbling so that you would prick up your ears, especially when he began to talk about Peter,[1] about the Tcherkessian steppes, or about foreign parts; well, and as a matter of course, he was fond of drinking with a nice man, only not to excess, and more for the sake of sociability—so travellers said of him.

Merchants bore great good-will toward him, as, in general, did all those people who call themselves old-fashioned—those people who do not set out on a journey without having girded themselves and who do not enter a room without crossing themselves,[2] and who will not enter into conversation with a man without hav-

[1] St. Petersburg.—Translator.
[2] To the holy pictures.—Translator.

ing preliminarily bidden him "good morning." Akím's mere personal appearance disposed one in his favour; he was tall, rather gaunt, but very well built, even in his mature years; he had a long, comely and regular face, a high, open brow, a thin, straight nose, and small lips. The glance of his prominent brown eyes fairly beamed with gentle cordiality, his thin, soft hair curled in rings about his neck: very little of it remained on the crown of his head. The sound of Akím's voice was very agreeable, although weak; in his youth he had been a capital singer, but his long journeys in the open air, in winter, had impaired his lungs. On the other hand, he spoke very fluently and sweetly. When he laughed, ray-like wrinkles, very pleasant to behold, spread themselves out around his eyes;—such wrinkles are to be seen only in kind people. Akím's movements were generally slow and not devoid of a certain self-confidence and sedate courtesy, as was befitting a man of experience who had seen much in his day.

In fact, Akím would have been all right,—or, as they called him even in the manor-house, whither he was wont to go frequently, as well as unfailingly on Sundays after the morning service in church, Akím Semyónovitch,[1]—would have been all right in every respect had he not had one failing, which has ruined many men on this earth,

[1] See note on p. 273.—Translator.

and in the end ruined him also—a weakness for the female sex. Akím's amorousness went to extremes: his heart was utterly unable to resist a feminine glance; he melted in it, as the first autumnal snow melts in the sun . . . . and he had to pay dearly for his superfluous sensibility.

In the course of the first year after he had settled down upon the highway, Akím was so occupied with the building of his inn, with the installation of his establishment, and with all the worries which are inseparable from all new households, that he positively had not time to think of women, and if any sinful thoughts did enter his head, he promptly expelled them by the perusal of divers holy books, for which he cherished a great respect (he had taught himself to read and write during his first trip as carrier), by chanting the Psalms in an undertone, or by some other pious occupation. Moreover, he was already in his forty-sixth year,—and at that age all passions sensibly calm down and grow cool; and the time for marrying was past. Akím himself had begun to think that that folly, as he expressed it, had broken loose from him . . . but evidently no man can escape his fate.

Akím's former owner, Lizavéta Prókhorovna Kuntze, who had been left a widow by her husband, a staff-officer of German extraction, was herself a native of the town of Mittau, where she had passed the early days of her childhood, and

where she still had a very numerous and needy family, concerning whom, however, she troubled herself very little, especially since one of her brothers, an officer in an army infantry regiment, had unexpectedly presented himself at her house and on the following day had raised such an uproar that he had all but thrashed the mistress of the house herself, and had addressed her, into the bargain, as "*du Lumpenmamsell!*" while on the preceding evening he had himself called her in broken Russian: "sister and benefactress." Lizavéta Prókhorovna hardly ever left the nice little estate acquired by the efforts of her spouse, who had been an architect;[1] she herself managed it, and managed it far from badly. Lizavéta Prókhorovna did not let slip the smallest source of profit; she derived advantage to herself from everything; and in this point, as well as in that of remarkable cleverness in making one kopék serve instead of two, her German nationality betrayed itself; in everything else she had become extremely Russified. She had a considerable number of domestic serfs; in particular, she kept a great many maids, who, however, did not eat the bread of idleness: from morning until night their backs were bowed over work.[2] She was fond of

[1] He had been a staff-officer in the civil service, according to Peter the Great's Table of Ranks. — TRANSLATOR.

[2] These numerous maids, in the old serf days, were employed in making the most exquisite linen, lace, embroidery, and so forth.— TRANSLATOR.

driving out in her carriage with liveried lackeys on the foot-board; she was fond of having people retail gossip to her and play the sycophant; and she herself was a first-rate gossip; she was fond of loading a man down with her favours, and suddenly stunning him with disgrace—in a word, Lizavéta Prókhorovna conducted herself exactly like a nobly-born dame.—She favoured Akím,—he paid her a good round quit-rent with punctuality,—she chatted graciously with him, and even, in jest, invited him to be her guest . . . but it was precisely in the manor-house that calamity awaited Akím.

Among the number of Lizavéta Prókhorovna's maids, there was one young girl of twenty, an orphan, Dunyásha by name. She was not ill-favoured, was well formed and clever; her features, although not regular, were calculated to please; her fresh complexion, her thick, fair hair, her red lips, and a certain dashing, half-sneering, half-challenging expression of face, were all quite charming in their way. Moreover, in spite of her orphaned state, she bore herself staidly, almost haughtily; she was descended from an ancient line of house-serfs; her late father, Aréfy, had been major-domo for thirty years, and her grandfather, Stepán, had served as valet to a gentleman long since deceased, a sergeant of the Guards and a prince. She dressed neatly, and was proud of her hands, which really were ex-

tremely handsome. Dunyásha showed great disdain for all her admirers, listened to their sweet sayings with a conceited smile, and if she answered them, it was chiefly by exclamation only, in the nature of: "Yes! certainly! catch me doing that! the idea!" . . . These exclamations scarcely ever left her tongue. Dunyásha had spent about three years in Moscow, under instruction, where she had acquired those peculiar grimaces and manners which characterise chambermaids who have sojourned in the capitals. People spoke of her as a conceited girl (a great encomium in the mouths of domestics) who, although she had seen much of life, had not lowered her dignity. She sewed far from badly, moreover; but, nevertheless, Lizavéta Prókhorovna had no particular liking for her, thanks to the head maid, Kiríllovna, a woman no longer young, sly, and fond of intrigue. Kiríllovna profited by her great influence over her mistress, and contrived very artfully to keep rivals out of the way.

And it was with this Dunyásha that Akím fell in love! And in a way such as he had never loved before. He beheld her for the first time in church; she had only just returned from Moscow; . . . . then he met her several times in the manor-house; at last he spent a whole evening with her at the overseer's, whither he had been invited to tea, along with other honourable personages. The house-serfs did not look down

on him, although he did not belong to their social class, and wore a beard;[1] but he was a cultured man, could read and write, and—chief thing of all—he had money; moreover, he did not dress in peasant fashion, but wore a long kaftan of black cloth, boots of dressed calf-leather, and a small kerchief round his neck. To tell the truth, some of the house-serfs did make remarks among themselves to the effect, "'t is plain, nevertheless, that he is not one of us," but to his face they almost flattered him. That evening at the overseer's, Dunyásha completed the conquest of Akím's amorous heart, although she positively did not reply by a single word to all his ingratiating speeches, and only now and then cast a sidelong glance at him, as though astonished at seeing that peasant there. All this only inflamed Akím the more. He went off home, thought, and thought, and made up his mind to obtain her hand. . . . So thoroughly had she "bewitched" him. But how shall we describe Dunyásha's wrath and indignation when, five days later, Kiríllovna, affectionately calling her into her room, announced to her that Akím (and evidently he had understood how to set about the business), —that that beard-wearer and peasant Akím, to sit beside whom she had regarded as an insult,— was courting her!

At first Dunyásha flushed hot all over, then she

[1] The beard was regarded as a mark of peasant origin.—Translator.

emitted a forced laugh, then fell to weeping; but Kiríllovna conducted the attack so artfully, so clearly made her feel her position in the house, so cleverly hinted at Akím's decent appearance, wealth, and blind devotion, and, in conclusion, so significantly alluded to the mistress's own wishes, that Dunyásha left the room with hesitation depicted on her face, and encountering Akím, merely gazed intently into his eyes, but did not turn away. The fabulously lavish gifts of this enamoured man dispelled her last doubts. . . . Lizavéta Prókhorovna, to whom Akím, in his joy, had presented a hundred peaches on a large silver salver, gave her consent to his marriage with Dunyásha, and the wedding took place. Akím spared no expense—and the bride, who on the eve of the wedding had sat in the maids' room like one on the verge of expiring, and had done nothing but cry on the very morning of the wedding, while Kiríllovna was dressing her for the ceremony, was speedily comforted. . . . Her mistress gave her her own shawl to wear in church —and that very same day Akím gave her another of the same sort, only almost better.

So then Akím married, and transported his young wife to his inn. . . . They began to live. Dunyásha proved to be a bad housekeeper, a poor helpmeet for her husband. She never looked after anything, she grieved, was bored, unless some passing officer was attentive to her and paid

court to her, as he sat behind the capacious samovár; she frequently absented herself, sometimes going to the town to shop, sometimes to the mistress's manor-house, which lay four versts distant from the inn. In the manor-house she refreshed herself; there people of her own sort surrounded her; the maids envied her smart attire; Kiríllovna treated her to tea; Lizavéta Prókhorovna herself chatted with her. . . . But even these visits did not pass off without bitter emotions for Dunyásha. . . . For instance, being a house-serf, she was not allowed to wear a bonnet, and was obliged to muffle her head up in a kerchief . . . . " like a merchant's wife," as the crafty Kiríllovna said to her. . . . " Like the wife of a petty burgher," thought Dunyásha to herself.

More than once there recurred to Akím's mind the words of his only relative, an aged uncle, an inveterate peasant, a man without family or land: " Well, brother, Akímushka," he had said to him, when he met him in the street, " I have heard that thou 'rt a-courting. . . ."

" Well, yes, I am; what of it? "

" Ekh, Akím, Akím! Thou 'rt no mate for us peasants now, there 's no denying it; neither is she a mate for thee."

" But why is n't she a mate for me? "

" Why, for this reason, at least,"—returned the other, pointing to Akím's beard, which he, to

please his bride, had begun to clip close—he would not consent to shave it off entirely. . . . Akím dropped his eyes; and the old man turned away, wrapped about him the skirts of his sheepskin coat, which was ragged on the shoulders, and went his way, shaking his head.

Yes, more than once did Akím grow pensive, grunt and sigh. . . . But his love for his pretty wife did not diminish; he was proud of her, especially when he compared her, not only with the other peasant women, or with his former wife, whom he had married at the age of sixteen, but with the other maids of the house-serf class: as much as to say: "Just see what sort of a bird we 've captured!" . . . . Her slightest caress afforded him great pleasure. . . "Perhaps," he thought to himself, "she 'll get used to me, she 'll grow accustomed to her new life. . ." Moreover, she conducted herself very well, and no one could say an evil word concerning her.

Several years passed in this manner. Dunyásha really did end by becoming used to her existence. The older Akím grew, the more attached he became to her, and the more he trusted her; her friends, who had married men not of the peasant class, suffered dire need, or were in distress, or had fallen into evil hands. . . . But Akím continued to wax richer and richer. He succeeded in everything—he was lucky; only one thing grieved him: God had not given him any children. Dun-

yásha was already in her twenty-fifth year; every one had come to call her Avdótya Aréfyevna.[1] Nevertheless, she had not become a good housewife.—But she had come to love her home, she attended to the stores of provisions, she looked after the servant-maids. . . . Truth to tell, she did all this in an indifferent way, and did not exercise the proper oversight as to cleanliness and order; but, on the other hand, in the principal room of the inn, alongside the portrait of Akím, hung her portrait, painted in oils and ordered by her from a home-bred artist, the son of the parish deacon.—She was represented in a white gown and a yellow shawl, with six rows of large pearls on her neck, long earrings in her ears, and rings on every finger. . . It was possible to recognise her,—although the painter had depicted her as extremely corpulent and rosy-cheeked, and had painted her eyes black instead of grey, and even a trifle squinting. . . He had not succeeded at all with Akím: the latter had, somehow, turned out very dark—*à la Rembrandt*,—so that a traveller would sometimes step up and stare at it, and merely bellow a bit.

'Avdótya had begun to dress with a good deal of carelessness; she would throw a large kerchief over her shoulders, and the gown under it would

[1] Neither field-serfs nor the superior house-serfs were addressed by their patronymic (like the nobility). Dunyásha is the diminutive of Avdóty.—Translator.

fit anyhow; indolence had taken possession of her, that sighing, languid, sleepy indolence to which Russians are but too greatly inclined, especially when their existence is assured. . . . .

Nevertheless, the affairs of Akím and his wife throve very well; they lived in concord, and bore the reputation of being an exemplary married pair. But, like the squirrel which is cleaning its nose at the very moment when the arrow is aimed at it, a man has no foreboding of his own disaster—and suddenly down he crashes, as though on the ice. . . .

One autumn evening a merchant with dry-goods stopped at Akím's inn. He was making his way, by devious roads, with two loaded kibítkas, from Moscow to Khárkoff; he was one of those peddlers whom the wives and daughters of landed proprietors sometimes await with so much impatience. With this peddler, already an elderly man, were travelling two comrades, or, to put it more accurately, two workmen—one pale, thin, hump-backed, the other a stately, handsome young fellow of twenty. They ordered supper, then sat down to drink tea; the peddler invited the landlord and landlady to drink a cup with him—and they did not refuse. A conversation was speedily under way between the two old men (Akím had seen his fifty-sixth birthday); the peddler was making inquiries concerning the neighbouring landed pro-

prietors,—and no one could impart to him all necessary details about them better than could Akím. The hump-backed labourer kept continually going out to look at the carts, and at last took himself off to sleep; Avdótya was left to chat with the other labourer. . . . She sat beside him and talked little, and chiefly listened to what he narrated to her; but evidently his remarks pleased her; her face grew animated, a flush played over her cheeks, and she laughed quite often and readily. The young labourer sat almost motionless, with his curly head bent toward the table; he spoke softly without raising his voice, and without haste; on the other hand his eyes, not large, but audaciously bright and blue, fairly bored into Avdótya; at first she turned away from them, then she began to gaze into his face. The young fellow's face was as fresh and smooth as a Crimean apple; he smiled frequently and drummed his white fingers on his white chin, already covered with sparse, dark down. He expressed himself after the merchant fashion, but with great ease, and with a certain careless self-confidence—and kept staring at her all the while with the same insistent and insolent look. . . . Suddenly he moved a little closer to her, and without changing the expression of his face in the least, he said to her: " Avdótya Aréfyevna, there 's nobody in the world nicer than you; I 'm ready to die for you, I do believe."

Avdótya laughed loudly.

"What 's the matter with thee?"—Akím asked her.

"Why, this man here is telling such absurd things,"—she said, but without any special confusion.

The old peddler grinned.

"He, he, yes, ma'am; that Naúm of mine is such a joker, sir. But you must n't listen to him, ma'am."

"Yes, certainly! as if I would listen to him,"—she replied, and shook her head.

"He, he, of course, ma'am,"—remarked the old man.—"Well, but,"—he added in a drawl,—"good-bye, I 'm much obliged, ma'am, but now 't is time to go to roost, ma'am. . . ." And he rose to his feet.

"And we are much obliged, sir, too, sir,"—said Akím also,—"for the entertainment, that is to say; but now we wish you good night, sir. Rise, Avdótyushka."

Avdótya rose, as though reluctantly, and after her Naúm rose also . . . . and all dispersed.

The landlord and landlady betook themselves to the small, closet-like room which served them as a bedroom. Akím set to snoring instantly. Avdótya could not get to sleep for a long time. . . . At first she lay still, with her face turned to the wall, then she began to toss about on the hot feather-bed, now throwing off, now drawing

up the coverlet . . . . then she fell into a light doze. All of a sudden, a man's loud voice resounded in the yard; it was singing some slow but not mournful song, the words of which could not be distinguished. Avdótya opened her eyes, raised herself on her elbow, and began to listen. . . . The song still went on. . . . It poured forth sonorously on the autumnal air.

Akím raised his head.

"Who 's that singing?"—he inquired.

"I don't know,"—she replied.

"He sings well,"—he added, after a brief pause.—"Well. What a strong voice. I used to sing in my day,"—he continued,—"and I sang well, but my voice is ruined. But that 's a fine singer. It must be that young fellow singing. Naúm is his name, I think."—And he turned over on his other side—drew a deep breath, and fell asleep again.

The voice did not cease for a long time thereafter. . . . Avdótya continued to listen and listen; at last it suddenly broke off short, as it were, then uttered one more wild shout, and slowly died away. Avdótya crossed herself, and laid her head on the pillow. . . . Half an hour elapsed. . . . She raised herself and began softly to get out of bed. . . .

"Whither art thou going, wife?"—Akím asked her through his sleep.

She stopped short.

"To adjust the shrine-lamp," [1]—she answered; "somehow or other I can't sleep."

"Thou hadst better say thy prayers,"—stammered Akím as he fell asleep.

Avdótya went to the shrine-lamp, began to adjust it, and incautiously extinguished it; she returned and lay down in bed. Silence reigned.

Early on the following morning the merchant set out on his way with his companions. Avdótya was sleeping. Akím escorted them for about half a verst; he was obliged to go to the mill. On returning home he found his wife already dressed, and no longer alone; with her was the young fellow of the previous evening, Naúm. They were standing by the table, near the window, and talking together. On catching sight of Akím, Avdótya silently left the room, but Naúm said that he had returned for his master's mittens, which the latter had forgotten on the bench, and he also left the room.

We shall now inform our readers of that which they, no doubt, have already divined without our aid: Avdótya had fallen passionately in love with Naúm. How this could come to pass so quickly, it is difficult to explain; it is all the more difficult, in that, up to that time, she had behaved in an irreproachable manner, notwithstanding numerous opportunities and temptations to betray her

[1] It is customary to have a holy picture, with a shrine-lamp filled with olive-oil burning before it, in bedrooms.—Translator.

marital vows. Later on, when her relations with Naúm became public, many persons in the countryside declared that on that very first evening he had put some magic herb into her tea (people with us still believe firmly in the efficacy of this method), and that this was very readily to be discerned in Avdótya, who, they said, very soon thereafter began to grow thin and bored.

However that may be, at all events Naúm began to be frequently seen at Akím's inn. First, he journeyed past with that same merchant, but three months later he made his appearance alone, with his own wares; then a rumour became current that he had taken up his residence in one of the near-by towns of the county, and from that time forth not a week passed that his stout, painted cart, drawn by a pair of plump horses which he drove himself, did not make its appearance on the highway.

There was no great friendship between him and Akím, but no hostility between them was apparent; Akím paid no great attention to him, and knew nothing about him, except that he was an intelligent young fellow, who had started out boldly. He did not suspect Avdótya's real feelings, and continued to trust her as before.

Thus passed two years more.

Then, one summer day, before dinner, about one o'clock, Lizavéta Prókhorovna, who precisely during the course of those two years had some-

how suddenly grown wrinkled and sallow, despite all sorts of massage, rouge, and powder,—Lizavéta Prókhorovna, with her lap-dog and her folding parasol, strolled forth for a walk in her neat little German park. Lightly rustling her starched gown, she was walking with mincing steps along the sanded path, between two rows of dahlias drawn up in military array, when suddenly she was overtaken by our old acquaintance, Kiríllovna, who respectfully announced that a certain merchant from B*** desired to see her on a very important matter. Kiríllovna, as of yore, enjoyed the mistress's favour (in reality, *she* managed the estate of Madame Kuntze), and some time previously had received permission to wear a white mob-cap, which imparted still more harshness to the thin features of her swarthy face.

"A merchant?"—inquired the lady. "What does he want?"

"I don't know, ma'am, what he wants,"—replied Kiríllovna in a wheedling voice;—"but, apparently, he wishes to purchase something from you, ma'am."

Lizavéta Prókhorovna returned to the drawing-room, seated herself in her customary place, an arm-chair with a canopy, over which ivy meandered prettily, and ordered the merchant from B*** to be summoned.

Naúm entered, made his bow, and halted at the door.

"I have heard that you wish to buy something from me,"—began Lizavéta Prókhorovna, and thought to herself the while:—"What a handsome man this merchant is!"

"Exactly so, ma'am."

"And precisely what is it?"

"Will you not deign to sell your inn?"

"What inn?"

"Why, the one which stands on the highway, not far from here."

"But that inn does not belong to me. That is Akím's inn."

"Why is n't it yours? It stands on your land, ma'am."

"Assuming that the land is mine . . . . bought in my name; still the inn is his."

"Just so, ma'am. So then, won't you sell it to us, ma'am?"

"I am to sell it?"

"Just so, ma'am. And we would pay a good price for it."

Lizavéta Prókhorovna maintained silence for a while.

"Really, this is strange,"—she began again; "what are you saying? But how much would you give?"—she added.—"That is to say, I am not asking for myself, but for Akím."

"Why, with all the buildings and, ma'am, dependencies, ma'am . . . well . . . and, of course, with the land attached to the inn, we would give two thousand rubles, ma'am."

"Two thousand rubles! That 's very little," —replied Lizavéta Prókhorovna.

"That 's the proper price, ma'am."

"But, have you talked it over with Akím?"

"Why should we talk with him, ma'am? The inn is yours, so we have thought best to discuss it with you, ma'am."

"But I have already told you . . . . really, this is astonishing! How is it that you do not understand me?"

"Why don't we understand, ma'am? We do."

Lizavéta Prókhorovna looked at Naúm, Naúm looked at Lizavéta Prókhorovna.

"How is it to be, then, ma'am?"—he began: —"what proposal have you to make on your side, that is to say, ma'am?"

"On my side . . . ." Lizavéta Prókhorovna fidgeted about in her easy-chair.—"In the first place, I tell you that two thousand is not enough, and in the second place . . . ."

"We 'll add a hundred, if you like."

Lizavéta Prókhorovna rose.

"I see that you are talking at cross-purposes, and I have already told you that I cannot and will not sell that inn. I cannot . . . . that is to say, I will not."

Naúm smiled and made no reply for a while.

"Well, as you like, ma'am . . . ." he remarked, with a slight shrug of the shoulders;—"I will

bid you good-day, ma'am."—And he made his bow, and grasped the door-handle.

Lizavéta Prókhorovna turned toward him.

"However, ... " she said, with barely perceptible hesitation,—"you need not go just yet." —She rang the bell; Kiríllovna made her appearance from the boudoir.

"Kiríllovna, order the servants to give the merchant tea.—I will see you later on,"—she added, with a slight inclination of her head.

Naúm bowed again, and left the room in company with Kiríllovna.

Lizavéta Prókhorovna paced up and down the room a couple of times, then rang the bell again. This time a page entered. She ordered him to summon Kiríllovna. In a few moments Kiríllovna entered, with barely a squeak of her new goat's-leather shoes.

"Didst thou hear,"—began Lizavéta Prókhorovna, with a constrained smile,—"what that merchant is proposing to me? Such a queer man, really!"

"No, ma'am, I did n't hear. . . . What is it, ma'am?"—And Kiríllovna slightly narrowed her little, black, Kalmýk eyes.

"He wants to buy Akím's inn from me."

"And what of that, ma'am?"

"Why, seest thou . . . . But how about Akím? I have given it to Akím."

"And, good gracious, my lady, what is it you

are pleased to say? Is n't that inn yours? Are n't we your property, pray? And everything we have,—is n't that also the property of the mistress?"

"Mercy me, what 's that thou 'rt saying, Kiríllovna?"—Lizavéta Prókhorovna got out her batiste handkerchief and nervously blew her nose. —"Akím bought that inn out of his own money."

"Out of his own money? And where did he get that money?—Was n't it through your kindness? And, then, see how long he has enjoyed the use of the land. . . . Surely, all this is through your kindness. And do you think, madam, that even so he will not have more money left? Why, he 's richer than you are, as God is my witness, ma'am!"

"All that is so, of course, but, nevertheless, I cannot. . . . How am I to sell that inn?"

"But why not sell it, ma'am?"—went on Kiríllovna.—"Luckily, a purchaser has turned up. Permit me to inquire, ma'am, how much does he offer you?"

"Over two thousand rubles,"—said Lizavéta Prókhorovna, softly.

"He 'll give more, madam, if he offers two thousand at the first word. And you can settle with Akím afterward; you can reduce his quit-rent, I suppose.—He will still be grateful."

"Of course, his quit-rent must be reduced. But no, Kiríllovna; how can I sell? . . ." And

Lizavéta Prókhorovna paced up and down the room. . . . "No, it is impossible; it is n't right; . . . . no; please say no more to me about it . . . or I shall get angry. . . ."

But in spite of the prohibition of the excited Lizavéta Prókhorovna, Kiríllovna continued to talk, and half an hour later she returned to Naúm, whom she had left in the butler's pantry with the samovár.

"What have you to tell me, my most respected?"—said Naúm, foppishly turning his empty cup upside down on his saucer.

"This is what I have to tell you,"—returned Kiríllovna:—"that you are to go to the mistress; she bids you come."

"I obey, ma'am,"—replied Naúm, rising, and followed Kiríllovna to the drawing-room.

The door closed behind them. . . . When, at last, that door opened again and Naúm backed out of it bowing, the matter was already settled; Akím's inn belonged to him; he had acquired it for two thousand eight hundred rubles in bank-bills.[1] They had decided to complete the deed of sale as promptly as possible, and not to announce the sale until that was accomplished; Lizavéta Prókhorovna had received one hundred rubles as deposit, and two hundred rubles went to Kiríllovna as commission.

[1] The difference in value between paper and silver money was considerable in those days, and the sort of currency is generally specified. —Translator.

" I have got it at a bargain,"—thought Naúm, as he climbed into his cart; " I 'm glad it turned out well."

At that very time, when the bargain which we have described was being effected at the manor-house, Akím was sitting alone on the wall-bench under the window, in his own room, and stroking his beard with an air of displeasure. . . . We have stated above that he did not suspect his wife's fondness for Naúm, although kind persons had, more than once, hinted to him that it was high time for him to listen to reason; of course, he himself was sometimes able to observe that his housewife, for some time past, had become more restive; but then, all the world knows that the female sex is vain and capricious. Even when it really seemed to him that something was wrong, he merely waved it from him; he did not wish, as the saying is, to raise a row; his good-nature had not diminished with the years, and, moreover, indolence was making itself felt. But on that day he was very much out of sorts; on the previous evening he had unexpectedly overheard on the street a conversation between his maid-servant and another woman, one of his neighbours. . . .

The woman had asked his maid-servant why she had not run in to see her on the evening of the holiday. " I was expecting thee," she said.

" Why, I would have come,"—replied the maid-servant,—" but, shameful to say, I caught

the mistress at her capers . . . . bad luck to her!"

"Thou didst catch her . . . ." repeated the peasant-wife in a peculiarly-drawling tone, propping her cheek on her hand.—"And where didst thou catch her, my mother?"

"Why, behind the hemp-patches—the priest's hemp-patches. The mistress, seest thou, had gone out to the hemp-patches to meet that fellow of hers, that Naúm, and I could n't see in the dark, whether because of the moonlight, or what not, the Lord knows, and so I ran right against them."

"Thou didst run against them,"—repeated the peasant-wife again.—"Well, and what was she doing, my mother? Was she standing with him?"

"She was standing, right enough. He was standing and she was standing. She caught sight of me, and says she: 'Whither art thou running to? Take thyself off home.' So I went."

"Thou wentest."—The peasant-wife was silent for a space.—"Well, good-bye, Fetíniushka,"—she said, and went her way.

This conversation had produced an unpleasant effect on Akím. His love for Avdótya had already grown cold, but, nevertheless, the maid-servant's words displeased him. And she had told the truth: as a matter of fact, Avdótya had gone out that evening to meet Naúm, who had waited for her in the dense shadow which fell

upon the road from the tall and motionless hemp-patch. The dew had drenched its every stalk from top to bottom; the scent, powerful to the point of oppressiveness, lay all around. The moon had only just risen, huge and crimson, in the dim and the blackish mist. Naúm had heard Avdótya's hasty footsteps from afar, and had advanced to meet her. She reached him all pale with running; the moon shone directly in her face.

"Well, how now; hast thou brought it?"—he asked her.

"Yes, I have,"—she replied in an irresolute tone:—"but, Naúm Ivánovitch, what . . . ."

"Give it here, if thou hast brought it,"—he interrupted her, stretching out his hand.

She drew from beneath her kerchief on her neck some sort of packet. Naúm instantly grasped it and thrust it into his breast.

"Naúm Ivánitch,"—enunciated Avdótya, slowly, and without taking her eyes from him. . . . "Okh, Naúm Ivánitch, I am ruining my soul for thee. . . ."

At that moment the maid-servant had come upon them.

So, then, Akím was sitting on the wall-bench and stroking his beard with his dissatisfaction. Avdótya kept entering the house and leaving it. He merely followed her with his eyes. At last she entered yet again, and taking a warm wadded jacket from the little room, she was already cross-

ing the threshold; but he could endure it no longer, and began to talk, as though to himself:

"I wonder,"—he began,—"what makes these women-folks always so fidgety? That they should sit still in one spot is something that can't be demanded of them. That 's no affair of theirs. But what they do love is to be running off somewhere or other, morning or evening.—Yes."

Avdótya heard her husband's speech out to the end without changing her attitude; only, at the word "evening," she moved her head a mere trifle, and seemed to become thoughtful.

"Well, Semyónitch,"—she said at last, with irritation,—"'t is well known that when thou beginnest to talk, why. . . ."

She waved her hand and departed, slamming the door behind her. Avdótya did not, in fact, hold Akím's eloquence in high esteem, and it sometimes happened, when he undertook of an evening to argue with the travellers, or began to tell stories, she would yawn quietly or walk out of the room. Akím stared at the closed door. . . . "When thou beginnest to talk," he repeated in an undertone . . . . "that 's exactly it, that I have talked very little with thee. . . . And who art thou? My equal, and, moreover . . . ." And he rose, meditated, and dealt himself a blow on the nape of his neck with his clenched fist. . . .

A few days passed after this day in a decidedly queer manner. Akím kept on staring at

his wife, as though he were preparing to say something to her; and she, on her side, darted suspicious glances at him; moreover, both of them maintained a constrained silence; this silence, however, was generally broken by some snappish remark from Akím about some neglect in the housekeeping, or on the subject of women in general; Avdótya, for the most part, did not answer him with a single word. But, despite all Akím's good-natured weakness, matters would infallibly have come to a decisive explanation between him and Avdótya had it not been for the fact that, at last, an incident occurred, after which all explanations would have been superfluous.

Namely, one morning, Akím and his wife were just preparing to take a light meal after the noon hour (there was not a single traveller in the inn, after the summer labours), when suddenly a small cart rumbled energetically along the road, and drew up at the porch. Akím glanced through the small window, frowned, and dropped his eyes; from the cart, without haste, Naúm alighted. Avdótya did not see him, but when his voice resounded in the anteroom, the spoon trembled weakly in her hand. He ordered the hired man to put his horse in the yard. At last the door flew wide open, and he entered the room.

"Morning,"—he said, and doffed his cap.

"Morning,"—repeated Akím through his teeth.—"Whence has God brought thee?"

"From the neighbourhood,"—returned the other, seating himself on the wall-bench.—"I come from the lady-mistress."

"From the mistress,"—said Akím, still not rising from his seat.—"On business, pray?"

"Yes, on business. Avdótya Aréfyevna, our respects to you."

"Good morning, Naúm,"—she replied.

All remained silent for a space.

"What have you there—some sort of porridge, I suppose?"—began Naúm. . . .

"Yes, porridge,"—retorted Akím, and suddenly paled:—"but it is n't for thee."

Naúm darted a glance of astonishment at Akím.

"Why is n't it for me?"

"Why, just because it is n't for thee."—Akím's eyes began to flash, and he smote the table with his fist.—"There is nothing in my house for thee, dost hear me?"

"What ails thee, Semyónitch, what ails thee? What 's the matter with thee?"

"There 's nothing the matter with me, but I 'm tired of *thee,* Naúm Iványitch, that 's what."—The old man rose to his feet, trembling all over.—"Thou hast taken to haunting my house altogether too much, that 's what."

Naúm also rose to his feet.

"Thou hast gone crazy, brother, I do believe,"—he said with a smile.—"Avdótya Aréfyevna, what 's the matter with him?" . . .

"I tell thee,"—yelled Akím, in a quivering voice,—"get out. Dost hear me? . . . . What hast thou to do with Avdótya Aréfyevna? . . . . Begone, I tell thee! Dost hear me?"

"What 's that thou art saying to me?"—inquired Naúm, significantly.

"Take thyself away from here; that 's what I 'm saying to thee. There is God, and there is the threshold . . . . dost understand? or 't will be the worse for thee!"

Naúm strode forward.

"Good heavens, don't fight, my dear little doves,"—stammered Avdótya, who until then had remained sitting motionless at the table. . . .

Naúm cast a glance at her.

"Don't worry, Avdótya Aréfyevna, why should we fight! Ek-sta, brother,"—he continued, addressing Akím:—"thou hast deafened me with thy yells. Really. What an insolent fellow thou art! Did any one ever hear of such a thing as expelling a man from another man's house,"—added Naúm, with deliberate enunciation:—"and the master of the house, into the bargain?"

"What dost thou mean by another man's house?"—muttered Akím.—"What master of the house?"

"Why, me, for example."

And Naúm screwed up his eyes, and displayed his white teeth in a grin.

"Thee, forsooth? Ain't I the master of the house?"

"What a stupid fellow thou art, my good fellow.—I am the master of the house, I tell thee."

Akím opened his eyes to their widest.

"What nonsense is that thou art prating, as though thou hadst eaten mad-wort?"—he said at last.—"How the devil dost thou come to be the master?"

"Well, what 's the use of talking to thee,"—shouted Naúm, impatiently.—"Dost see this document,"—he added, jerking out of his pocket a sheet of stamped paper folded in four:—"dost see it? This is a deed of sale, understand, a deed of sale for thy land, and for the inn; I have bought them from the landed proprietress, Lizavéta Prókhorovna. We signed the deed of sale yesterday, in B***—consequently, I am the master here, not thou. Gather up thy duds this very day,"—he added, putting the paper back in his pocket;—"and let there be not a sign of thee here by to-morrow; hearest thou?"

Akím stood as though he had been struck by lightning.

"Brigand!"—he moaned at last;—"the brigand. . . Hey, Fédka, Mítka, wife, wife, seize him, seize him—hold him!"

He had completely lost his wits.

"Look out, look out,"—ejaculated Naúm,

menacingly:—" look out, old man, don't play the fool. . . ."

" But beat him, beat him, wife! "—Akím kept repeating in a tearful voice, vainly and impotently trying to leave his place.—" The soul-ruiner, the brigand. . . She was n't enough for thee . . . thou wantest to take my house away from me also, and everything. . . . But no, stay . . . . that cannot be. . . . I will go myself. I will tell her myself . . . how . . . . but why sell? . . . Stop . . . . stop. . . ."

And he rushed hatless into the street.

" Whither art thou running, Akím Ivánitch, whither art thou running, dear little father? "—cried the maid-servant Fetínya, who collided with him in the doorway.

" To the mistress! let me go! To the mistress. . . ." roared Akím, and catching sight of Naúm's cart, which the servants had not yet had time to put in the stable-yard, he sprang into it, seized the reins, and lashing the horse with all his might, he set off at a gallop to the lady's manor-house.

" Dear little mother, Lizavéta Prókhorovna," —he kept repeating to himself all the way,— " why such unkindness? I have shown zeal, methinks! "

And, in the meantime, he kept on beating the horse. Those who met him drew aside and gazed long after him.

In a quarter of an hour Akím had reached Lizavéta Prókhorovna's manor, had dashed up to the porch, had leaped from the cart, and burst straight into the anteroom.

"What dost thou want?"—muttered the startled footman, who was sweetly dozing on the locker.

"The mistress—I must see the mistress," vociferated Akím loudly.

The lackey was astounded.

"Has anything happened?"—he began.

"Nothing has happened, but I must see the mistress."

"What, what?"—said the lackey, more and more astounded, straightening himself up.

Akím recovered himself. . . It was as though he had been drenched with cold water.

"Announce to the mistress, Piótr Evgráfitch,"—he said, with a low obeisance,—"that Akím wishes to see her. . . ."

"Good, . . . I will go . . . . I will announce thee . . . . but evidently thou art drunk. Wait,"—grumbled the lackey, and withdrew.

Akím dropped his eyes and became confused, as it were. . . . His boldness had swiftly abandoned him from the very moment he had entered the anteroom.

Lizavéta Prókhorovna was also disconcerted when Akím's arrival was announced to her. She

immediately gave orders that Kiríllovna should be called to her in her boudoir.

"I cannot receive him,"—she said hurriedly, as soon as the latter made her appearance;—"I cannot possibly do it. What can I say to him? Did n't I tell thee that he would be sure to come and would complain?"—she added, with vexation and agitation;—"I said so. . . ."

"Why should you receive him, ma'am?"—calmly replied Kiríllovna;—"that is not necessary, ma'am. Why should you disturb yourself, pray?"

"But what am I to do?"

"If you will permit me, I will talk with him."

Lizavéta Prókhorovna raised her head.

"Pray, do me the favour, Kiríllovna. Do talk with him. Do thou tell him . . . . there—well, that I found it necessary . . . and, moreover, that I will make it up to him . . . . well, there now, thou knowest what to say. Pray, do, Kiríllovna."

"Please do not fret, madam,"—returned Kiríllovna, and withdrew, with squeaking shoes.

A quarter of an hour had not elapsed when their squeaking became audible again, and Kiríllovna entered the boudoir with the same composed expression on her face, with the same crafty intelligence in her eyes.

"Well,"—inquired her mistress,—"how about Akím?"

" 'T is all right, ma'am. He says, ma'am, that everything is in your power, he submits himself wholly to the will of your Graciousness, and if only you keep well and prosperous, he will forever be satisfied with his lot."

" And he made no complaint? "

" None whatever, ma'am. What was there for him to complain about? "

" But why did he come, then? "—said Lizavéta Prókhorovna, not without some surprise.

" Why, he came to ask, ma'am, until he receives compensation, whether you will not be so gracious as to remit his quit-rent for the coming year, that is to say . . . ."

" Of course I will! I will remit it,"—put in Lizavéta Prókhorovna, with vivacity;—" of course. And, tell him, in general terms, that I will reward him. Well, I thank thee, Kiríllovna. And he is a good peasant, I see. Stay,"—she added:—" here, give him this from me."—And she took out of her work-table a three-ruble bill.—" Here, take this and give it to him."

" I obey, ma'am,"—replied Kiríllovna, and coolly returning to her own room, she coolly locked up the bank-bill in an iron-bound casket which stood by the head of her bed; she kept in it all her ready money, and the amount was not small.

Kiríllovna by her report had soothed her lady, but the conversation between her and Akím had,

in reality, not been precisely as she represented it, but to wit: she had ordered him to be summoned to her in the maids' hall. At first he refused to go to her, declaring that he did not wish to see Kiríllovna, but Lizavéta Prókhorovna herself; nevertheless, at last, he submitted, and wended his way through the back door to Kiríllovna. He found her alone. On entering the room he came to a halt at once, leaned against the wall near the door, and made an effort to speak . . . . and could not.

Kiríllovna stared intently at him.

"Do you wish to see the mistress, Akím Semyónitch?"—she began.

He merely nodded his head.

"That is impossible, Akím Semyónitch. And what is the use? What is done can't be undone, and you will only worry her. She cannot receive you now, Akím Semyónitch."

"She cannot,"—he repeated, and paused for a space.—"Then how is it to be,"—he said at last;—"that means that I must lose my house?"

"Hearken, Akím Semyónitch. I know that you have always been a reasonable man. This is the mistress's will. And it cannot be changed. You cannot alter it. There is nothing for you and me to discuss, for it will lead to no result. Is n't that so?"

Akím put his hands behind his back.

"But you had better consider,"—went on Ki-

ríllovna,—" whether you ought not to ask the mistress to remit your quit-rent, had n't you? . . ."

" That means that I must lose the house,"—repeated Akím, in the same tone as before.

" Akím Semyónitch, I 've told you already 't is impossible to change that. You know that yourself even better than I do."

" Yes. But tell me, at any rate, how much my inn sold for? "

" I don't know that, Akím Semyónitch; I can't tell you. . . . But why do you stand there? "—she added.—" Sit down. . . ."

" I 'll stand as I am, ma'am. I 'm a peasant. I thank you humbly."

" Why do you say that you are a peasant, Akím Semyónitch? You are the same as a merchant; you cannot be compared even with the house-serfs; why do you say that? Don't decry yourself without cause. Won't you have some tea? "

" No, thanks; I don't require it. And so my dear little house has become your property,"—he added, quitting the wall.—" Thanks for that, also. I will bid you good day, my little madam."

Thereupon he wheeled round, and left the room. Kiríllovna smoothed down her apron, and betook herself to her mistress.

" So it appears that I actually have become a merchant,"—said Akím to himself, as he paused in thought before the gate.—" A fine merchant! "

He waved his hand and laughed a bitter laugh. —" Well, I might as well go home! "

And utterly oblivious of Naúm's horse, which he had driven thither, he trudged along the road to the inn. Before he had covered the first verst, he heard the rattle of a cart alongside of him.

" Akím, Akím Semyónitch! "—some one called to him.

He raised his eyes and beheld his acquaintance, the chanter of the parish church, Efrém, nicknamed " The Mole," a small, round-shouldered man, with a sharp-pointed little nose, and purblind eyes. He was sitting in a rickety little cart on a whisp of straw, with his breast leaning on the driver's seat.

" Art thou on thy way home, pray? "—he asked Akím.

Akím halted.

" Yes."

" I 'll drive you there,—shall I? "

" All right, do."

Efrém moved aside, and Akím clambered into the cart. Efrém, who was jolly with drink, it appeared, set to lashing his miserable little nag with the ends of his rope reins; the horse advanced at a weary trot, incessantly twitching her unbridled muzzle.

They drove about a verst, without saying one word to each other. Akím sat with bowed head,

and Efrém merely mumbled something to himself, now stimulating the horse to greater speed, now reining it in.

"Whither hast thou been without a hat, Semyónitch?"—he suddenly asked Akím, and, without waiting for a reply, he went on in an undertone:—"thou hast left it in a nice little dram-shop, that 's what. Thou 'rt a tippler; I know thee, and I love thee because thou art a tippler—'t was high time, long ago, to place thee under ecclesiastical censure, God is my witness; because 't is a bad business. . . . Hurrah!"—he shouted suddenly, at the top of his lungs,—"hurrah! hurrah!"

"Halt! halt!"—rang out a woman's voice close at hand.—"Halt!"

Akím glanced round. Across the fields, in the direction of the cart, a woman was running, so pale and dishevelled that he did not recognise her at first.

"Halt, halt!"—she moaned again, panting and waving her arms.

Akím shuddered: it was his wife.

He seized the reins.

"And why should we halt?"—muttered Efrém;—"why should we halt for a female? Get u-uup!"

But Akím jerked the horse abruptly on its haunches.

At that moment Avdótya reached the road, and fairly tumbled headlong, face downward, in the dust.

"Dear little father, Akím Semyónitch,"—she shrieked;—"he has actually turned me out of doors!"

Akím gazed at her, and did not move, but merely drew the reins still more taut.

"Hurrah!"—cried Efrém again.

"And so he has turned thee out?"—said Akím.

"He has, dear little father, my dear little dove," replied Avdótya, sobbing.—"He has turned me out, dear little father. 'The house is mine now,' says he; 'so get out,' says he."

"Capital, that 's just fine . . . capital!"—remarked Efrém.

"And thou wert counting on remaining, I suppose?"—said Akím, bitterly, as he continued to sit in the cart.

"Remain, indeed! Yes, dear little father,"—put in Avdótya, who had raised herself on her knees, and again beat her brow against the ground;—"for thou dost not know, seest thou, I. . . . Kill me, Akím Semyónitch, kill me here, on the spot. . . ."

"Why should I beat thee, Aréfyevna!"—replied Akím, dejectedly:—"thou hast vanquished thyself! what more is there to say?"

"But what wilt thou think, Akím Semyó-

nitch. . . . Why, the money . . . . was thy money. . . . It is gone, thy money. . . For I took it, accursed that I am, I got it from the cellar. . . . . I gave it all to that man, that villain, that Naúm, accursed creature that I am! . . . And why didst thou tell me where thou hadst hidden thy money, wretched being that I am! . . . . For he bought the inn with thy money . . . . the villain. . . ."

Sobs drowned her voice.

Akím clutched his head with both hands.

"What!"—he screamed at last;—"and so all the money too . . . the money, and the inn, thou hast. . . . Ah! thou hast got it from the cellar . . . . from the cellar. . . . Yes, I will kill thee, thou brood of vipers! . . ."

And he leaped from the cart. . . .

"Semyónitch, Semyónitch, don't beat her, don't fight,"—stammered Efrém, whose intoxication began to dissipate at such an unexpected event.

"Yes, dear little father, kill me, kill me, dear little father, kill me, the vile creature: beat away, don't heed him!"—shrieked Avdótya, as she writhed convulsively at Akím's feet.

He stood awhile and stared at her, then retreated a few paces, and sat down on the grass, by the roadside.

A brief silence ensued. Avdótya turned her head in his direction.

"Semyónitch, hey, Semyónitch!"—began Efrém, half-rising in the cart;—"have done with that—that will do . . . for thou canst not repair the calamity. Phew, what an affair!"—he continued, as though to himself;—"what a damned bad woman. . . Do thou go to him,"—he added, bending over the cart-rail toward Avdótya;—"canst not see that he has gone crazy?"

Avdótya rose, approached Akím and again fell at his feet.

"Dear little father,"—she began in a faint voice.

Akím rose and went back to the cart. She clutched the skirt of his kaftan.

"Get away!"—he shouted fiercely, repulsing her.

"Whither art thou going?"—Efrém asked him, perceiving that he was taking his seat again beside him.

"Why, thou didst offer to drive me to the inn,"—said Akím:—"so drive me to thy house. . . . I have none any more, seest thou. They have bought it from me, you know."

"Well, all right, let 's go to my house. And how about her?"

Akím made no answer.

"And me, me,"—chimed in Avdótya, weeping;—"to whose care dost thou leave me . . . . whither am I to go?"

"Go to him,"—returned Akím, without turn-

ing round:—"to the man to whom thou didst carry my money. . . Drive on, Efrém!"

Efrém whipped up the horse, the cart rolled off, and Avdótya set up a shrill scream. . . .

Efrém lived a verst from Akím's inn, in a tiny cot in the priest's glebe, disposed around the solitary five-domed church, which had recently been erected by the heirs of a wealthy merchant, in conformity with his testamentary dispositions. Efrém did not speak to Akím all the way, and only shook his head from time to time, uttering words of the following nature: "Akh, thou!" and, "Ekh, thou!" Akím sat motionless, slightly turned away from Efrém. At last they arrived. Efrém sprang out first from the cart. A little girl of six years in a little chemise girt low ran out to meet him, and screamed:

"Daddy! daddy!"

"And where is thy mother?"—Efrém asked her.

"She 's asleep in the kennel."

"Well, let her sleep. Akím Semyónitch, won't you please come into the house?"

(It must be observed that Efrém addressed him as "thou" only when he was intoxicated. Far more important persons than he addressed Akím as "you.")

Akím entered the chanter's cottage.

"Pray, come hither to the bench,"—said Efrém.—"Run along, you little rogues,"—he

shouted at three other brats who, along with two emaciated cats bespattered with ashes, suddenly made their appearance from various corners of the room.—"Run away! Scat! Here, Akím Semyónitch, come here,"—he went on, as he seated his guest:—"and would n't you like something?"

"What shall I say to thee, Efrém?"—articulated Akím at last.—"Could n't I have some liquor?"

Efrém gave a start.

"Liquor? Certainly. I have none in the house,—liquor, that is to say,—but here, I 'll run at once to Father Feódor. He always has some on hand. . . . . I 'll be back in a jiffy. . . ."

And he snatched up his large-eared cap.

"And bring as much as possible; I 'll pay for it,"—shouted Akím after him.—"I still have money enough for that."

"In a jiffy," . . . repeated Efrém once more, as he disappeared through the door. He really did return very speedily with two quart bottles under his arm, one of which was already uncorked, placed them on the table, got out two small green glasses, the heel of a loaf, and salt.

"That 's what I love,"—he kept repeating, as he seated himself opposite Akím.—"What 's the use of grieving?"—he filled the glasses for both . . . . and set to babbling. . . . Avdótya's behaviour had stunned him.—"'T is an astonishing

affair, truly,"—said he:—"how did it come about? He must have bewitched her to himself by magic . . . . hey? That 's what it means, that a woman should be strictly watched! She ought to have had a tight hand kept over her. And yet, it would n't be a bad thing for you to go home; for you must have a lot of property left there, I think."—And to many more speeches of the same sort did Efrém give utterance; when he was drinking he did not like to hold his tongue.

An hour later, this is what took place in Efrém's house. Akím, who had not replied by a single word, during the entire course of the drinking-bout, to the interrogations and comments of his loquacious host, and had merely drained glass after glass, was fast asleep on the oven, all red in the face—in a heavy, anguished slumber; the youngsters were wondering at him, while Efrém . . . . Alas! Efrém was asleep also, but only in a very cramped and cold lumber-room, in which he had been locked up by his wife, a woman of extremely masculine and robust build. He had gone to her in the stable, and had begun to threaten her, if she repeated something or other, but so incoherently and unintelligibly did he express himself that she instantly divined what the trouble was, grasped him by the collar, and led him to the proper place. However, he slept very well and even comfortably in the lumber-room. Habit!

Kiríllovna had not reported her conversation with Akím very accurately to Lizavéta Prókhorovna . . . . and the same may be said concerning Avdótya. Naúm had not turned her out of the house, although she had told Akím that he had done so; he had not the right to expel her. . . . He was bound to give the former proprietors time to move out. Explanations of quite another sort had taken place between him and Avdótya. When Akím had rushed into the street, shouting that he would go to the mistress, Avdótya had turned to Naúm, had stared at him with all her eyes, and clasped her hands.

"O Lord!"—she began;—"Naúm Iványitch, what is the meaning of this? Have you bought our inn?"

"What if I have, ma'am?"—he retorted.—"I have bought it, ma'am."

Avdótya said nothing for a while, then suddenly took fright.

"So that is what you wanted the money for?"

"Precisely as you are pleased to put it, ma'am. Ehe, I do believe that measly little husband of yours has driven off with my horse,"—he added, as the rumble of wheels reached his ear.—"What a fine dashing fellow he is!"

"Why, but this is robbery, nothing else!"—shrieked Avdótya.—"For the money is ours, my husband's, and the inn is ours . . . ."

"No, ma'am, Avdótya Aréfyevna,"—Naúm

interrupted her:—" the inn was n't yours, and what 's the use of saying so; the inn stood on the lady-mistress's land, so it belonged to her also; and the money really was yours, only you were so kind, I may put it, as to contribute it to me, ma'am; and I shall remain grateful to you, and shall even, if the occasion arises, return it to you,—if I should see my way to it; only, it is n't right that I should strip myself bare. Just judge for yourself if that is n't so."

Naúm said all this very calmly, and even with a slight smile.

" Good heavens! " — screamed Avdótya;— " but what 's the meaning of this? What is it? But how am I to show myself in my husband's sight after this? Thou villain! "—she added, gazing with hatred at Naúm's young, fresh face; —" have n't I ruined my soul for thee, have n't I become a thief for thy sake, hast not thou turned us out of doors, thou abominable villain? ! After this there is nothing left for me but to put a noose about my neck, villain, deceiver, thou destroyer of me. . . ."

And she wept in torrents. . . .

" Pray, don't worry, Avdótya Aréfyevna,"— said Naúm;—" I 'll tell you one thing; a fellow must look out for number one; moreover, that's what the pike is in the sea for, Avdótya Aréfyevna—to keep the carp from getting drowsy."

" Where are we to go now, what is to be-

come of us?"—stammered Avdótya through her tears.

"That 's more than I can tell, ma'am."

"But I 'll cut thy throat, thou villain; I will, I will! . . ."

"No, you won't do that, Avdótya Aréfyevna; what 's the use of saying that? But I see that it will be better for me to go away from here for a while, or you will be much upset. . . . I will bid you good day, ma'am, and to-morrow I shall return without fail. . . . And you will be so good as to permit me to send my hired men to you to-day,"—he added, while Avdótya continued to repeat, through her tears, that she would cut his throat and her own also.

"And yonder they come, by the way,"—he remarked, looking out of the window. "Otherwise, some catastrophe might happen, which God forbid. . . . Matters will be more tranquil so. Do me the favour to get your belongings together to-day, ma'am, while they will stand guard over you and help you, if you like. I bid you good day, ma'am."

He bowed, left the room and called his men to him. . . .

Avdótya sank down on the wall-bench, then laid herself breast down on the table, and began to wring her hands, then suddenly sprang to her feet, and ran after her husband. . . . We have described their meeting.

When Akím drove away from her in company with Efrém, leaving her alone in the fields, she first wept for a long time, without stirring from the spot. Having wept her fill, she directed her course to the mistress's manor. It was a bitter thing for her to enter the house, and still more bitter to show herself in the maids'-hall. All the maids flew to greet her with sympathy and expressions of regret. At the sight of them, Avdótya could not restrain her tears; they fairly gushed forth from her red and swollen eyes. Completely unnerved, she dropped down on the first chair she came to. They ran for Kiríllovna. Kiríllovna came, treated her very affectionately, but would not admit her to see the mistress, any more than she had admitted Akím. Avdótya herself did not insist very strongly on seeing Lizavéta Prókhorovna; she had come to the manor-house solely because she positively did not know where to lay her head.

Kiríllovna ordered the samovár to be prepared. For a long time Avdótya refused to drink tea, but yielded, at last, to the entreaties and persuasions of all the maids, and after the first cup drank four more. When Kiríllovna perceived that her visitor was somewhat pacified, and only shuddered from time to time, sobbing faintly, she asked her whither they intended to remove, and what they wished to do with their things. This question set Avdótya to crying again, and she be-

gan to asseverate that she wanted nothing more, except to die; but Kiríllovna, being a woman of brains, immediately stopped her and advised her to set about transferring her things that very day, without useless waste of time, to Akím's former cottage in the village, where dwelt his uncle, that same old man who had tried to dissuade him from marrying; she announced that, with the mistress's permission, they would be furnished with transportation, and the aid of people and horses; " and as for you, my dearest,"—added Kiríllovna, compressing her cat-like lips in a sour smile,—" there will always be a place for you in our house, and it will be very agreeable to us if you will be our guest until you recover yourself and get settled in your house. The principal thing is—you must not get downcast. The Lord gave, the Lord has taken away, and He will give again: everything depends on His will. Lizavéta Prókhorovna, of course, was obliged to sell your house, according to her calculations, but she will not forget you, and will reward you; she bade me say so to Akím Semyónitch. . . Where is he now? "

Avdótya replied that, on meeting her, he had grossly insulted her, and had driven off to Chanter Efrém's.

" To that creature's! "—replied Kiríllovna, significantly.—" Well, I understand that it is painful for him now, and I don't believe you can

hunt him up to-day. What is to be done? We must take measures, Maláshka,"—she added, turning to one of the chambermaids. "Just ask Nikanór Ílitch to step here; I will have a talk with him."

Nikanór Ílitch, a man of very paltry appearance, who served somewhat in the capacity of overseer, immediately presented himself, obsequiously listened to everything which Kiríllovna said to him,—remarked: "It shall be executed," left the room and issued his orders. Avdótya was furnished with three carts and three peasants; these were voluntarily joined by a fourth, who said of himself that he would be "more intelligent than they," and she set off in company with them for the inn, where she found her former hired men and her maid-servant, Fetínya, in great terror and excitement. . . .

Naúm's recruits, three extremely robust young fellows, had arrived in the morning, and had gone nowhere since, but had maintained a very zealous guard over the inn, according to Naúm's promise —so zealous, that one cart speedily proved to be devoid of tires. . .

Bitter, very bitter was it for poor Avdótya to pack up her things. Despite the assistance of the "intelligent" man, who, by the way, knew how to do nothing but stalk about with a staff in his hand, and watch the others, and spit to one side,

she did not succeed in moving out that day, and remained to spend the night in the inn, having first requested Fetínya not to leave her room; but it was not until daybreak that she fell into a feverish doze, and the tears streamed down her cheeks even in her sleep.

In the meantime, Efrém awoke earlier than was his wont in his lumber-room, and began to thump and demand his release. At first his wife would not let him out, declaring to him through the door that he had not yet had enough sleep; but he excited her curiosity by promising to tell her about the remarkable thing which had happened to Akím; she undid the latch.—Efrém imparted to her everything he knew, and wound up with the question: "Was he awake or not?"

"Why, the Lord knows,"—replied his wife; —"go and see for thyself; he has not climbed down from the oven yet.—You both got pretty drunk last night; thou shouldst just see thyself —thy face has no semblance of a face; 't is like some sort of ladle; and what a lot of hay has got into thy hair!"

"Never mind if it has,"—returned Efrém,— and passing his hand over his head, he entered the house.—Akím was no longer asleep; he was sitting on the oven with his legs dangling; his face also was very strange and discomposed. It appeared all the more distorted because Akím was not in the habit of drinking heavily.

" Well, how now, Akím Semyónitch, how have you slept? "—began Efrém. . . .

Akím looked at him with a turbid gaze.

" Come, brother Efrém,"—he said hoarsely,—" can't we do it again—thou knowest what? "

Efrém darted a swift glance at Akím . . . . at that moment he felt a sort of thrill; that is the kind of sensation a sportsman experiences when standing on the skirt of the woods, at the sudden yelping of his hound in the forest, from which, apparently, all the wild beasts have already fled.

" What—more? "—he asked at last.

" Yes; more."

" My wife will see,"—thought Efrém,—" and I don't believe she will allow it."—" All right, it can be done,"—he said aloud;—" have patience."—He went out and, thanks to artfully conceived measures, succeeded in smuggling in a huge bottle unperceived beneath the skirt of his coat. . . .

Akím seized the bottle . . . But Efrém did not start to drink with him as on the preceding evening—he was afraid of his wife, and,—having told Akím that he would go and see how things were progressing at his house, and how his belongings were being packed, and whether he were not being robbed,—he immediately set off for the inn astride of his unfed little nag,—not forgetting himself, however, if we may take into consideration his projecting bosom.

Soon after his departure, Akím fell asleep again, and lay like one dead on the oven. . . . He did not even wake up—at all events, he showed no signs of being awake—when Efrém, returning four hours later, began to shove him and try to rouse him, and whisper over him some extremely indistinct words to the effect that everything was gone and transported and the holy pictures were gone too, and everything was already over—and that every one was hunting for him, but that he, Efrém, had taken due measures, and had prohibited . . . and so forth. But he did not whisper long. His wife led him off to the lumber-room again, and herself lay down in the house, on the platform over the oven, in great indignation at her husband and at the guest, thanks to whom her husband had got drunk. . . . But when, on awakening very early, according to her wont, she cast a glance at the oven, Akím was no longer on it. . . . The cocks had not yet crowed for the second time, and the night was still so dark that the sky was barely turning grey directly overhead, and at the rim was still completely drowned in vapour, when Akím emerged from the gate of the chanter's house. His face was pale, but he darted a keen glance around him, and his gait did not betray the drunkard. . . . He walked in the direction of his former dwelling—the inn, which had already definitively become the property of its new owner, Naúm.

Naúm was not sleeping either, at the time when Akím stealthily quitted Efrém's house. He was not asleep; he was lying completely dressed on the wall-bench, with his sheepskin coat rolled up under his head. It was not that his conscience was tormenting him—no! he had been present with astounding cold-bloodedness, from the morning on, at the packing and transportation of Akím's household goods, and had more than once spoken to Avdótya, who was downcast to such a degree that she did not even upbraid him. . . . His conscience was at ease, but divers surmises and calculations occupied his mind. He did not know whether he was going to make a success of his new career; up to that time, he had never kept an inn—and, generally speaking, had never even had a nook of his own; and so he could not get to sleep.—"This little affair has been begun well," —he thought;—"what will the future be?" . . . When the last cart-load of Akím's effects had set off just before night-fall (Avdótya had followed it weeping), he had inspected the entire inn, all the stables, cellars, and barns; he had crawled up into the attic, had repeatedly ordered his labourers to maintain a strict watch, and, when he was left alone after supper, he had not been able to get to sleep. It so happened that on that day none of the travellers stopped to pass the night; and this pleased him greatly. "I must buy a dog without fail to-morrow,—the worst-tempered

dog I can get, from the miller; for they have carried off theirs,"—he said to himself, as he tossed from side to side, and, all of a sudden, he raised his head hastily. . . . It seemed to him as though some one had stolen past under the window. . . He listened. . . Not a sound. Only a grasshopper shrilled behind the oven, from time to time, and a mouse was gnawing somewhere, and his own breath was audible. All was still in the empty room, dimly illuminated by the yellow rays of a tiny glass shrine-lamp, which he had found time to suspend and light in front of a small holy picture in the corner. . . He lowered his head; and now again he seemed to hear the gate squeaking . . . . then the wattled hedge crackled faintly. . . . He could not endure it, leaped to his feet, opened the door into the next room, and called in a low tone: "Feódor, hey, Feódor!"—No one answered him. . . . He went out into the anteroom and nearly fell prone, as he stumbled over Feódor, who was sprawling on the floor. The labourer stirred, growling in his sleep; he shook him.

"Who 's there? What 's wanted?"—Feódor was beginning. . . .

"What art thou yelling for? Hold thy tongue!"—articulated Naúm in a whisper.—"The idea of your sleeping, you damned brutes! Hast thou not heard anything?"

"No,"—replied the man. . . . "Why?"

" And where are the others sleeping? "

" The others are sleeping where they were ordered to. . . . But has anything happened? . . ."

" Silence!—Follow me."

Naúm softly opened the door leading from the anteroom into the yard. . . . Out of doors everything was very dark; . . . it was possible to make out the sheds with their pillars only because they stood out still more densely black in the midst of the black mist. . . .

" Sha'n't I light a lantern? "—said Feódor in a low voice.

But Naúm waved his hand and held his breath. . . . At first he could hear nothing except those nocturnal sounds which one can almost always hear in inhabited places: a horse was munching oats, a pig grunted once faintly in its sleep, a man was snoring somewhere; but suddenly there reached his ear a suspicious sort of noise, proceeding from the extreme end of the yard, close to the fence. . . .

It seemed as though some one was moving about, and breathing or blowing. . . . Naúm looked over Feódor's shoulder, and, cautiously descending the steps, walked in the direction of the sound. . . . A couple of times he halted, and listened, then continued to creep stealthily onward. . . . Suddenly he gave a start. . . . Ten paces from him, in the dense gloom, a point of light suddenly glimmered brightly: it was a red-

hot coal, and beside the coal there showed itself for a brief instant the front part of some one's face, with lips puffed out. . . . Swiftly and silently Naúm darted at the light, as a cat darts at a mouse. . . . Hastily rising from the ground, a long body rushed to meet him, and almost knocked him from his feet, almost slipped through his hands, but he clung to it with all his might. . . .

" Feódor! Andréi! Petrúshka! "—he shouted, at the top of his lungs;—" come here quick, quick! I 've caught a thief, an incendiary! "

The man whom he had captured struggled and resisted . . . . but Naúm did not release him. . . . Feódor immediately darted to his assistance.

" A lantern, quick, a lantern! Run for a lantern! wake the others, be quick! "—Naúm shouted to him,—" and I 'll manage him alone meanwhile —I 'll sit on him. . . Be quick! and fetch a belt to bind him with! "

Feódor flew to the cottage. . . . The man whom Naúm was holding suddenly ceased his resistance. . . .

" So, evidently, 't is not enough for thee to have taken my wife and my money, and my house, but thou art bent on destroying me also,"—he said in a dull tone. . . .

Naúm recognised Akím's voice.

" So 't is thou, dear little dove,"—said he;—" good, just wait a bit! "

"Let me go,"—said Akím.—"Art not thou satisfied?"

"See here, to-morrow I 'll show you in the presence of the judge how satisfied I am. . . ." And Naúm tightened his hold on Akím. . . .

The labourers ran up with two lanterns and some ropes. . . . "Bind him!"—ordered Naúm, sharply. . . . The labourers seized Akím, lifted him up, and bound his hands behind him. . . . One of them was beginning to swear, but on recognising the former landlord of the inn, he held his peace, and merely exchanged glances with the others.

"Just see there, see there, now,"—Naúm kept repeating the while, as he passed the lantern along the ground;—"yonder, there are coals in a pot; just look, he has brought a whole firebrand in the pot—we must find out where he got that pot . . . and here, he has broken twigs. . . ." And Naúm assiduously stamped out the fire with his foot.—"Search him, Feódor!"—he added, "and see whether he has anything more about him."

Feódor searched and felt Akím, who stood motionless with his head drooping on his breast, like a dead man.—"There is—here 's a knife,"—said Feódor, drawing an old kitchen-knife from Akím's breast.

"Ehe, my dear fellow, so that 's what thou hadst in mind!"—exclaimed Naúm.—"You are

witnesses, my lads—see there, he intended to cut my throat, to burn up my house. . . . Lock him up in the cellar until morning; he can't get out of there. . . . I will stand watch all night myself, and to-morrow at dawn we will take him to the chief of police . . . . and you are witnesses, do you hear. . . ."

They thrust Akím into the cellar, and slammed the door behind him. . . . Naúm stationed two of the labourers there, and did not lie down to sleep himself.

In the meantime, Efrém's wife, having convinced herself that her unbidden guest had taken himself off, was on the point of beginning her cooking, although it was hardly daylight out of doors as yet. She squatted down by the oven to get some coals, and saw that some one had already raked out the live embers thence; then she bethought herself of her knife—and did not find it; in conclusion, one of her four pots was missing. Efrém's wife bore the reputation of being anything but a stupid woman—and with good reason. She stood for a while in thought, then went to the lumber-room to her husband. It was not easy to arouse him fully—and still more difficult was it to make him understand why he had been awakened. . . To everything which his wife said, Chanter Efrém made one and the same reply:

"He 's gone,—well, God be with him . . .

but what business is that of mine? He has carried off a knife and a pot—well, God be with him—but what business is that of mine?"

But, at last, he rose, and after listening intently to his wife, he decided that it was a bad business, and that it could not be left as it now stood.

"Yes,"—the chanter's wife insisted,—"'t is a bad business; I do believe he 'll do mischief out of desperation. . . . I noticed last night that he was not asleep as he lay there on the oven; it would n't be a bad idea for thee, Efrém Alexándritch, to find out whether . . . ."

"See here, Ulyána Feódorovna, I 'll tell thee what,"— began Efrém;—"I 'll go to the inn myself immediately; and do thou be kind, dear little mother; give me a little glass of liquor to cure me of my drunkenness."

Ulyána reflected.

"Well,"—she decided at last,—"I 'll give thee some liquor, Efrém Alexándritch; only look out, don't dally."

"Be at ease, Ulyána Feódorovna."

And, having fortified himself with a glass of liquor, Efrém set out for the inn.

Day had but just dawned when he rode up to the inn, and at the gate a cart was already standing harnessed, and one of Naúm's labourers was sitting on the driver's seat, holding the reins in his hands.

"Whither art thou going?"—Efrém asked him.

"To town,"—replied the labourer.

"Why?"

The labourer merely shrugged his shoulders and made no reply. Efrém sprang from his horse and entered the house. In the anteroom he ran across Naúm, fully dressed, and wearing a cap.

"I congratulate the new landlord on his new domicile,"—said Efrém, who was personally acquainted with him.—"Whither away so early?"

"Yes, there is cause for congratulation,"—replied Naúm, surlily.—"This is my first day, and I have almost been burnt out."

Efrém started.—"How so?"

"Why, just that; a kind man turned up, who tried to set the house on fire. Luckily, I caught him in the act; now I 'm taking him to town."

"It can't be Akím, can it?" . . . . asked Efrém, slowly.

"And how dost thou know? It is Akím. He came by night, with a firebrand in a pot, and had already crept into the yard, and laid a fire . . . . All my lads are witnesses.—Wouldst like to take a look? But, by the way, 't is high time we were carrying him off."

"Dear little father, Naúm Ivánitch,"—began Efrém,—"release him; don't utterly ruin the old man. Don't take that sin on your soul, Naúm

Iványitch. Just reflect,—the man is desperate,—he has lost, you know . . . ."

" Stop that prating!"—Naúm interrupted him.—" The idea! As though I would let him go! Why, he would set me on fire again to-morrow. . . ."

" He will not do it, Naúm Iványitch, believe me. Believe me, you yourself will be more at ease so—for, you see, there will be inquiries—the court—you surely know what I mean."

" Well, and what about the court? I have nothing to fear from the court. . . ."

" Dear little father, Naúm Iványitch, how can you help fearing the court? . . ."

" Eh, stop that; I see that thou art drunk early, and to-day is a feast-day, to boot."

Efrém suddenly, and quite unexpectedly, fell to weeping.

" I am drunk, but I 'm speaking the truth,"—he blurted out.—" But do you release him, in honour of Christ's festival."

" Come, let 's be starting, cry-baby."

And Naúm went out on the porch. . . .

" Forgive him for Avdótya Aréfyevna's sake,"—said Efrém, following him.

Naúm approached the cellar, and threw the door wide open. Efrém, with timorous curiosity, craned his neck from behind Naúm's back, and with difficulty made out Akím in one corner of the shallow cellar. The former wealthy house-

holder, the man respected in all the countryside, was sitting with pinioned arms on the straw, like a criminal. . . On hearing the noise, he raised his head. . . . He seemed to have grown frightfully thin in the last two days, especially during the last night—his sunken eyes were hardly visible beneath his lofty brow, yellow as wax, his parched lips had turned dark . . . his whole face had undergone a change, and assumed a strange expression: both harsh and terrified.

"Get up and come out,"—said Naúm.

Akím rose, and stepped across the threshold.

"Akím Semyónitch,"—roared Efrém,—"thou hast ruined thyself, my dear man!"

Akím glanced at him in silence.

"If I had known why thou didst ask for liquor, I would n't have given it to thee; indeed, I would n't! I do believe I would have drunk it all myself! Ekh, Naúm Ivánitch,"—added Efrém, seizing Naúm by the hand;—"have mercy on him, let him go!"

"Thou 'rt joking,"—retorted Naúm, with a grin.—"Come out, there,"—he added, again addressing Akím. . . "What art thou waiting for?"

"Naúm Ivánoff," . . . . began Akím.

"What?"

"Naúm Ivánoff,"—repeated Akím;—"listen; I am guilty; I wanted to punish thee myself; but God must judge between thou and me. Thou

hast taken everything from me, thou knowest that thyself—everything, to the very last morsel.—Now thou canst ruin me, and this is all I have to say to thee: If thou wilt release me now—well! let things stand! do thou possess everything! I agree, and wish thee all success. And I say to thee, as in the presence of God: If thou dost release me—thou shalt not regret it. God bless thee!"

Akím shut his eyes, and ceased speaking.

"Certainly, certainly,"—retorted Naúm;—"as though one could trust thee!"

"But thou canst, by God, thou canst!"—said Efrém; "really, thou canst. I 'm ready to go bail for Akím Semyónitch with my head—come now, really!"

"Nonsense!"—exclaimed Naúm.—"Let 's be off!"

Akím looked at him.

"As thou wilt, Naúm Ivánitch. Thou hast the power. Only, thou art taking a great deal on thy soul. All right, if thou art impatient,—let us start. . . ."

Naúm, in his turn, darted a keen glance at Akím. "But it really would be better,"—he thought to himself, "to let him go to the devil! Otherwise, folks will devour me alive. There 'll be no living for Avdótya." . . . . While Naúm was reasoning with himself no one uttered a single word. The labourer on the cart, who could see

everything through the gate, merely shook his head and slapped the reins on the horse's back. The other two labourers stood on the porch and also maintained silence.

" Come, listen to me, old man,"—began Naúm; —" if I let thee go,—and I forbid these fine fellows " (he nodded his head in the direction of the labourers) " to blab; shall we be quits, thou and I —thou understandest me—quits . . . . hey? "

" Possess everything, I say."

" Thou wilt not consider me in thy debt? "

" Thou wilt not be in debt to me, neither shall I be in debt to thee." Again Naúm was silent for a space.

" Well, take thy oath on that! "

" I do, as God is holy,"—replied Akím.

" Here goes then, although I know beforehand that I shall repent of it,"—remarked Naúm. —" But so be it! Give me your hands."

Akím turned his back toward him; Naúm began to unbind him.

" Look out, old man,"—he added, as he slipped the rope over his wrists:—" remember, I have spared thee; be careful! "

" You 're a dear, Naúm Ivánitch,"—stammered the deeply-moved Efrém.—" The Lord will be merciful to you! "

Akím stretched out his chilled and swollen arms, and was starting for the gate. . . .

All of a sudden Naúm " turned Jewish," as

the expression is—evidently, he was sorry that he had released Akím. . . .

"Thou hast taken an oath, look out,"—he shouted after him.

Akím turned round, and surveying the house with an embracing glance, said sadly:—"Possess thou everything, forever, undisturbed . . . . farewell."

And he stepped quietly into the street, accompanied by Efrém. Naúm waved his hand, ordered the cart to be unharnessed, and went back into the house.

"Whither away, Akím Semyónitch? Art not thou coming to my house?"—exclaimed Efrém,—perceiving that Akím turned to the right from the highway.

"No, Efrémushka, thanks,"—replied Akím. . . . "I will go and see what my wife is doing."

"Thou canst see later on. . . . But now thou must for joy . . thou knowest . . . ."

"No, thanks, Efrém. . . . I 've had enough as it is. Farewell."—And Akím walked away without looking behind him.

"Eka! He has had enough as it is!"—ejaculated the astounded chanter;—"and I have taken my oath on his behalf! Well, I did n't expect this,"—he added with vexation,—"after I had vouched for him. Phew!"

He remembered that he had forgotten to take his knife and pot, and returned to the inn. . . .

Naúm gave orders that his things should be delivered to him, but it never entered his head to entertain him. Thoroughly enraged and completely sober he presented himself at home.

"Well, what?"—his wife asked him;—"didst thou find him?"

"Did I find him?"—retorted Efrém;—"certainly I found him; there are thy utensils for thee."

"Akím?"—inquired his wife, with special emphasis.

Efrém nodded his head.

"Yes, Akím. But what a goose he is! I went bail for him; without me he would have been put in prison, and he never even treated me to a glass of liquor. Ulyána Feódorovna, do you, at least, show me consideration; give me just one little glass."

But Ulyána Feódorovna showed him no consideration and drove him out of her sight.

In the meantime, Akím was proceeding with quiet strides along the road which led to Lizavéta Prókhorovna's village. He had not yet been able fully to recover himself; he was all quivering inside, like a man who has but just escaped imminent death. He seemed not to believe in his freedom. With dull amazement he stared at the fields, at the sky, at the larks which were fluttering their wings in the warm air. On the previous day, at Efrém's house, he had not slept at all since

dinner, although he had lain motionless on the oven; at first he had tried to drown with liquor the intolerable pain of injury within him, the anguish of wrathful, impotent indignation . . . . but the liquor could not entirely overcome him; his heart waxed hot within him, and he began to meditate how he might pay off his malefactor. . . . He thought of Naúm alone; Lizavéta Prókhorovna did not enter his head, and from Avdótya he mentally turned away. Toward evening, the thirst for revenge had blazed up in him to the point of crime, and he, the good-natured, weak man, with feverish impatience waited for the night, and like a wolf pouncing on its prey, he rushed forth with fire in his hand to annihilate his former home. . . But he had been captured . . . . locked up. . . . Night came. What had not he turned over in his mind during that atrocious night! It is difficult to convey in words all the tortures which he had undergone; it is all the more difficult, because these torments even in the man himself were wordless and dumb. . . . Toward morning, before the arrival of Naúm and Efrém, Akím had felt somewhat easier in mind. . . "Everything is lost!" . . . . he thought . . . . "everything is scattered to the winds!"— and he waved his hand in despair over everything. . . . If he had been born with an evil soul, he might have turned into a criminal at that moment; but evil was not a characteristic of Akím.

Beneath the shock of the unexpected and undeserved calamity, in the reek of despair, he had made up his mind to a felonious deed; it had shaken him to the very foundations, and, having miscarried, it had left behind in him a profound weariness. . . . Conscious of his guilt, he wrenched his heart free from all earthly things, and began to pray bitterly but zealously. At first he prayed in a whisper, at last, accidentally, perhaps, he ejaculated almost aloud: "O Lord!" —and the tears gushed from his eyes. . . . Long did he weep, then calmed down at last. . . . His thoughts probably would have undergone a change, had he been forced to smart for his attempt of the day before . . . but now he had suddenly recovered his liberty . . . and, half-alive, all shattered, but calm, he was on his way to an interview with his wife.

Lizavéta Prókhorovna's manor stood a verst and a half distant from her village, on the left-hand side of the country road along which Akím was walking. At the turn which led to the manor, he was on the point of pausing . . . . but he marched past. He had decided first to go to his former cottage, to his old uncle.

Akím's tiny and already rickety cottage was situated almost at the extreme end of the village; Akím traversed the entire length of the street without encountering a single soul. The whole population was in church. Only one ailing old

woman lifted her window to gaze after him, and a little girl, who had run out to the well with an empty bucket, gaped in wonder at him and also followed him with her eyes. The first person whom he met was precisely the uncle whom he was seeking. The old man had been sitting since early morning on the earthen bank outside the cottage under the windows, taking snuff, and warming himself in the sun; he was not quite well, and for that reason had not gone to church; he was on his way to see another ailing old man, a neighbour, when he suddenly espied Akím. . . . He stopped short, let the latter come up to him, and looking him in the face, he said:

"Morning, Akímushka!"

"Morning,"—replied Akím, and stepping past the old man, he entered the gate to his cottage. . . . In the yard stood his horses, his cow, his cart; and his chickens were roaming about there also. . . . He entered the cottage in silence. The old man followed him. Akím seated himself on the bench, and rested his clenched fists on it. The old man gazed compassionately at him, from his stand at the door.

"And where is my housewife?"—inquired Akím.

"Why, at the manor-house,"—replied the old man, briskly. "She is there. They have placed thy cattle here, and thy coffers, just as they were —but she is yonder. Shall I go for her?"

Akím did not reply immediately.

"Yes, go,"—he said at last.

"Ekh, uncle, uncle,"—he articulated with a sigh, while the latter was taking his cap from its nail:—"dost thou remember what thou saidst to me on the eve of my wedding?"

"God's will rules all things, Akímushka."

"Dost thou remember how thou saidst to me that I was no fit mate for you peasants—and now see what a pass things have come to. . . . I myself have become as poor as a church mouse."

"A man can't make calculations against bad people,"—replied the old man;—"and as for him, the dishonest scoundrel, if any one were to teach him a good lesson, some gentleman, for instance, or any other power,—what cause would there be to fear him? The wolf recognised his prey."—And the old man put on his cap and departed.

Avdótya had but just returned from church when she was informed that her husband's uncle was inquiring for her. Up to that time she had very rarely seen him; he had not been in the habit of coming to their inn, and in general he bore the reputation of being a queer fellow; he was passionately fond of snuff, and preserved silence most of the time.

She went out to him.

"What dost thou want, Petróvitch? Has anything happened, pray?"

" Nothing has happened, Avdótya Aréfyevna; thy husband is asking for thee."

" Has he returned? "

" Yes."

" But where is he? "

" Why, in the village; he 's sitting in his cottage."

Avdótya quailed.

" Well, Petróvitch,"—she asked, looking him straight in the eye,—" is he angry? "

" 'T is not perceptible that he is."

Avdótya dropped her eyes.

" Well, come along,"—she said, throwing on a large kerchief, and the two set out. They walked in silence until they reached the village. But when they began to draw near to the cottage, Avdótya was seized with such alarm that her knees trembled under her.

" Dear little father, Petróvitch,"—she said,—" do thou go in first. . . . Tell him that I have come."

Petróvitch entered the cottage and found Akím sitting buried in profound thought, on the self-same spot where he had left him.

" Well,"—said Akím, raising his head;—" has n't she come? "

" Yes, she has come,"—replied the old man.—" She 's standing at the gate. . . ."

" Send her hither."

The old man went out, waved his hand to

Avdótya, said to her: "Go along!" and sat down again himself on the earthen bank along the cottage wall. With trepidation Avdótya opened the door, crossed the threshold and paused. . . .

Akím looked at her.

"Well, Aréfyevna,"—he began,—"what are we—thou and I—to do now?"

"Forgive me,"—she whispered.

"Ekh, Aréfyevna, we are all sinful folks. What 's the use of discussing it!"

"That villain has ruined both of us,"—began Avdótya in a voice which jingled and broke, and the tears streamed down her face.—"Thou must not let things stand as they are, Akím Semyónitch; thou must get the money from him. Do not spare me. I am ready to declare under oath that I lent the money to him. Lizavéta Prókhorovna had a right to sell our house, but why should he rob us? . . . . Get the money from him."

"I have no money to receive from him,"—replied Akím, gloomily.—"He and I have settled our accounts."

Avdótya was astounded.—"How so?"

"Why, because we have. Knowest thou,"—pursued Akím, and his eyes began to blaze;—"knowest thou where I spent the night? Thou dost not know? In Naúm's cellar, bound hand and foot, like a ram, that 's where I spent last night. I tried to burn down his house, and he

caught me, did Naúm; he 's awfully clever! And to-day he was preparing to carry me to the town, but he pardoned me; consequently, there is no money coming to me from him. . . . ' And when did I ever borrow any money of thee? ' he will say. And am I to say: ' My wife took it out from under my floor, and carried it to thee? '—' Thy wife is a liar,' he will say. And would n't it be a big exposure for thee, Aréfyevna? Hold thy tongue, rather, I tell thee, hold thy tongue."

" Forgive me, Semyónitch, forgive me,"—whispered the thoroughly frightened Avdótya.

" That 's not the point,"—replied Akím, after remaining silent for a while:—" but what are we —thou and I—to do? We no longer have a home . . . nor money either. . . ."

" We 'll get along somehow, Akím Semyónitch;—we will ask Lizavéta Prókhorovna and she will help us; Kiríllovna has promised me that."

" No, Aréfyevna, thou mayest ask her for thyself along with thy Kiríllovna; thou and she are birds of a feather.[1] But I 'll tell thee what: do thou stay here, with God's blessing. I shall not stay here. Luckily, we have no children, and perhaps I shall not starve alone. One person can worry along alone."

" What wilt thou do, Semyónitch—dost mean to go as carrier again? "

[1] In Russian: " Berries from the same field."—Translator.

Akím laughed bitterly.

"A pretty carrier I would make, there 's no denying that! A fine, dashing young fellow thou hast picked out! No, Aréfyevna, that is not the same sort of business as marrying, for example; an old man is not fit for it. Only I will not remain here, that 's what; I won't have people pointing the finger at me . . . . understand? I shall go to pray away my sins, Aréfyevna, that 's where I shall go."

"What sins hast thou, Semyónitch?"—articulated Avdótya, timidly.

"Well, wife, I know what they are."

"But in whose care wilt thou leave me, Semyónitch? How am I to live without a husband?"

"In whose care shall I leave thee? Ekh, Aréfyevna, how thou sayest that, forsooth! Much need hast thou of a husband like me, and an old man and a ruined one to boot. The idea! Thou has dispensed with me before, thou canst dispense with me hereafter also. And what property we have left thou mayest take for thyself, curse it! . . . . "

"As thou wilt, Semyónitch,"—replied Avdótya, sadly;—"thou knowest best about that."

"Exactly so. Only, don't think that I am angry with thee, Aréfyevna.

"No, what 's the use of being angry, when . . . . I ought to have discovered how things stood earlier in the day. I myself am to blame—

and I am punished."—(Akim heaved a sigh.)—"As you have made your bed, so you must lie upon it.[1] I am advanced in years, and 't is time for me to be thinking of my soul. The Lord Himself has brought me to my senses. Here was I, seest thou, an old fool, who wanted to live at his ease with a young wife. . . . No, brother—old man, first do thou pray, and beat thy brow against the earth, and be patient, and fast. . . . And now, go, my mother. I am very tired and I will get a bit of sleep."

And Akím stretched himself out, grunting on the bench.

Avdótya started to say something, stood for a while gazing at him, then turned and went away. . . .

"Well, did n't he thrash thee?"—Petróvitch asked her, as he sat, all bent double, on the earthen bank, when she came alongside of him. Avdótya passed him in silence.—"See there now, he did n't beat her,"—said the old man to himself, as he grinned, ruffled up his hair, and took a pinch of snuff.

Akím carried out his purpose. He speedily put his petty affairs in order, and a few days after the conversation which we have transcribed, he went, already garbed for the journey, to bid

[1] In Russian: "If you are fond of sleighing, then be fond also of dragging the sledge."—TRANSLATOR.

farewell to his wife, who had settled for the time being in a tiny wing of the mistress's manor-house. Their leave-taking did not last long. . . . Kiríllovna, who chanced to be on hand, advised Akím to present himself to the mistress; and he did so. Lizavéta Prókhorovna received him with a certain amount of confusion, but affably permitted him to kiss her hand, and inquired where he was intending to betake himself? He replied that he was going first to Kíeff, and thence whereever God should grant. She lauded his purpose, and dismissed him. From that time forth he rarely made his appearance at home, although he never forgot to bring his mistress a blessed bread with a particle taken out for her health. . . .[1]

[1] Tiny double loaves of leavened bread, like those used in preparing the Holy Communion, are sold at the entrances to churches. Any one who wishes to have the health of his living or the souls of his dead friend prayed for, buys a loaf, and sends it to the sanctuary before the beginning of the morning service, accompanied by a slip of paper, whereon is written: "For the health" (or "For the soul") "of Iván"—or whatever the friend's baptismal name may be. The priest removes from the loaf with his spear-shaped knife a triangular particle, which he places on the chalice (it is not used in the Communion), and at a certain point of the service, all these persons are prayed for, by name—the Lord being aware which of the Iváns or Máryas is intended. After the service the loaf is returned to the owner, who carries it home, and (when possible) gives it to the person who has been prayed for. It is the custom for pilgrims to the various shrines to bring back loaves of this sort to their friends, and these are highly prized. At some of the famous monasteries, instead of the customary imprint of a cross and the Greek letters meaning "Jesus Christ the Conqueror," which are used on the loaves for the Communion, a special holy bread (prosforá) is prepared for this purpose, stamped with the Saint or Saints for which the locality is renowned. In the primitive church, the worshippers were wont to bring offerings of bread, wine, oil and wheat, for the requirements of the service. As long as the congregations were not numerous, all such givers were

But, on the other hand, everywhere where devout Russians congregate, his gaunt and aged but still comely and sedate face was to be seen: at the shrine of St. Sergius, and on the White Shores, and in the Óptin Hermitage, and in distant Valaám.[1] He went everywhere. . . . This year he passed you in the ranks of the countless throng which marched in a procession of the cross behind the holy picture of the Birth-giver of God at the Korennáya Hermitage;[2] next year you would find him sitting with his wallet on his back, along with other pilgrims on the porch of St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker in Mtzensk. . . . He made his appearance in Moscow nearly every spring.

From place to place he trudged with his quiet, unhurried but unceasing stride—'t is said that he even went to Jerusalem. . . . He appeared to be perfectly composed and happy, and many persons talked about his piety and humility, espe-

prayed for by name. When members became so numerous that this would have been burdensome, the custom was instituted of praying for the Sovereign and his family, as representatives of all the rest: and this last custom still prevails, mingled (as above described) with a remnant of the original custom.—TRANSLATOR.

[1] The shrine of St. Sergius at the Tróitzky (Trinity) monastery, forty miles from Moscow. The Óptin Hermitage in Tambóff Government. "The White Shores"—the famous monasteries of Solovétzk, in the White Sea, and at Byélo-Ózero (White Lake), south of Lake Onéga. Valáam, an island in Lake Ladóga, with another famous monastery.—TRANSLATOR.

[2] The Korennáya Hermitage lies about sixteen miles northwest of Kursk, in southern Russia. Mtzensk, nearer the centre, is half-way between Orél and Túla.—TRANSLATOR.

cially those people who had chanced to converse with him.

In the meanwhile, Naúm's affairs throve exceedingly. He took hold briskly and understandingly, and, as the saying is, went to the head fast. Everybody in the neighbourhood knew by what means he had acquired possession of the inn, and they knew also that Avdótya had given him her husband's money; no one liked Naúm because of his cold and harsh character. . . . . They narrated with condemnation concerning him that one day he had replied to Akím himself, who had begged alms under his window, "God will provide," and had brought out nothing to him; but all agreed that no more lucky man than he existed; his grain throve better than his neighbours' grain; his bees swarmed more abundantly; even his hens laid more eggs; his cattle never fell ill; his horses never went lame. . . . . For a long time Avdótya could not endure to hear his name (she had accepted Lizavéta Prókhorovna's offer, and had again entered her service in the capacity of head-seamstress); but eventually, her aversion diminished somewhat; 't was said that want forced her to have recourse to him, and he gave her a hundred rubles. . . . We shall not condemn her too severely; poverty will break any one's spirit, and the sudden revolution in her life had aged and tamed her down greatly; it is difficult to believe how quickly she

lost her good looks, how she grew disheartened and low-spirited. . . .

"And how did it all end?"—the reader will ask.

Thus: Naúm, after having conducted his business successfully for fifteen years, sold his inn on profitable terms to a petty burgher. . . . He never would have parted with his house if the following apparently insignificant incident had not occurred: two mornings in succession his dog, as it sat in front of the windows, howled in a prolonged and mournful manner; on the second occasion he went out into the street, gazed attentively at the howling dog, shook his head, set off for the town, and that very day agreed on the price with a petty burgher, who had long been trying to purchase his inn. . . . A week later he departed for some distant place—out of the Government,—and what think you? that very night the inn was burned to the ground; not even a kennel remained intact, and Naúm's successor was reduced to beggary. The reader can easily imagine what rumours arose in the neighbourhood concerning this conflagration. . . . Evidently he carried his "luck" away with him, all declared. . . . It is reported that he engaged in the grain business, and became very wealthy. But was it for long? Other equally firm pillars have fallen prone, and sooner or later a bad deed has a bad ending.

It is not worth while to say much about Lizavéta Prókhorovna: she is alive to this day, and as often happens with people of that sort, she has not changed in the least; she has not even aged much, but only seems to have grown more lean; moreover, her penuriousness has increased to an extreme degree, although it is difficult to understand for whom she is always hoarding, since she has no children, and is related to no one. In conversation, she frequently alludes to Akím, and avers that ever since she discovered all his fine qualities, she has come to cherish a great respect for the Russian peasant. Kiríllovna has purchased her freedom from Lizavéta Prókhorovna for a considerable sum and has married, for love, some fair-haired young butler or other, at whose hands she endures bitter torture; Avdótya is living, as of yore, in the woman's wing of Lizavéta Prókhorovna's house, but has descended several rungs lower, dresses very poorly, almost filthily, and retains not a trace of the cityfied affectations of the fashionable maid, or the habits of a well-to-do landlady. . . . No one takes any notice of her, and she herself is glad that they do not; old Petróvitch is dead, but Akím is still roving on pilgrimages—and God alone knows how much longer he is destined to wander!